

Clinton weighing sanctions on Japan

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bill Clinton said Monday he was reviewing a range of possible retaliatory trade sanctions against Japan in the aftermath of last week's collapse of trade talks. "I'm not ruling anything out," the president told reporters. The White House said the first move could come as early as Tuesday in the form of increased tariffs on Japanese-built cellular telephones. Mr. Clinton conceded that such measures could trigger a new trade war with Japan, but he suggested that the United States could no longer sit idly by in the face of stubborn U.S.-Japanese trade imbalance. "We're looking at several options. I'm not ruling anything out," he said. Mr. Clinton suggested that the move on cellular phones might have taken place even if with a deadline that happens to fall on Tuesday. But, Mr. Clinton said, "it is a good illustration of the problem we face in entering Japanese markets." The president clearly hinted that even stronger trade retaliation was in the offing, complaining that Japan had been resistant to all efforts to reduce its trade surplus with the United States. "I think it's an unsustainable policy," he said.

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Rafsanjani brother joins Foreign Ministry

NICOSIA (Agencies) — Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani's younger brother became Iran's senior deputy foreign minister on Monday, a day after he was sacked from his post as head of radio and television. The Iranian news agency IRNA said Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati appointed Mohammad Hashemi as his first deputy, filling a post which had been vacant since Ali Mohammad Besharati became interior minister in a cabinet shuffle in August. Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei named Islamic Culture and Guidance Minister Ali Larjani as head of radio and television on Sunday and ordered changes in state broadcasting policies to give priority to quality over quantity and avoid "vulgar music." Mr. Hashemi, who studied engineering in California before the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's 1979 Islamic revolution, headed the state broadcast organization for the past 13 years. The Tehran Times newspaper, which is considered close to the foreign ministry, reported on Monday that Mostafa Mirsalim, a presidential adviser, is to become the new minister of Islamic culture and guidance.

Taba talks focus on police, prisoners

TABA, Egypt (Agencies) — Israeli and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) negotiators resumed talks Monday on implementing their autonomy agreement, focusing on the Palestinian police force.

After the police on the agenda is the issue of the thousands of Palestinians in Israeli jails. Major General Amnon Shahak, the Israeli deputy chief of staff and top negotiator, told reporters.

"We will talk about the number of police, their equipment, deployment, activity and coordination with us," said Gen. Shahak.

The Palestinians have proposed a police force of up to 20,000 men, while the Israelis are believed suggesting about 6,000.

Gen. Shahak spoke to reporters after a preliminary meeting with his Palestinian counterpart, Nabil Shaath. Gen. Shahak said the two outlined the discussions of the security committee for the week.

He said the committee would focus only on the police and prisoner releases. The PLO has demanded the release of security detainees it says number 14,000. Israel says it holds half that number.

Gen. Shahak said that the agreement on security reached last week in Cairo between Israeli Foreign Minister Shi-

mon Peres and PLO chairman Yasser Arafat was speeding the Taba discussions.

"The Cairo agreement makes things easier, now we have a wider base to go on," Gen. Shahak said.

In Cairo, the two sides agreed basically that Israel would retain control of the border crossings into the Gaza Strip and the West Bank City of Jericho, although the Palestinians would be allowed to fly their flag and the Palestinian guards at the border would have sidearms. They also agreed that Israel would maintain control over the main arteries in the Gaza Strip used by the settlers there.

Asked about the atmosphere after Cairo, the usually reticent Shahak looked out at the brilliant blue sky and smiled, saying "it's like the weather."

Gen. Shahak would not comment on Palestinian predictions the agreement could be wrapped up in a month. But the presence of Jacques Neriah, a top adviser to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, indicated the importance of the Israelis attached to getting through the talks.

Dr. Shaath's and Gen. Shahak's teams must also decide on security along roads between Jericho and Ajwa, a village about seven kilometres to the north.

Palestinians.

The Al Baath newspaper of President Hafez Al Assad's Baath Party said the benefits accrued to Israel by its agreements with the PLO were "temporary as they were signed by the one who does not represent the Palestinian people."

Mr. Assad has criticised Mr. Arafat for his Sept. 13 agreement with Israel.

Damascus fears it could undermine Arab consensus on the conditions for peace with the Jewish state, including Mr. Assad's own demand for a full return of the Golan Heights.

Al Baath criticised the Sept. 13 agreement as well as Mr. Arafat's compromise with Mr. Peres in Cairo as "partial solutions."

The English-language Syria Times said the Cairo agreement was "a sellout... by the Palestinian signatories."

Al Baath said the Washington talks are resuming amid "pessimistic climates," which it said was Israel's fault for not making serious goodwill gestures beforehand.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin meanwhile rejected the idea of a total Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho.

He said in a television interview Israel remained responsible for "external security" and

for the safety of Israeli citizens in Jericho and the Gaza Strip.

One factor slowing down the Taba talks was the Holy Month of Ramadan, when Muslims refrain from food, drink, cigarettes and sex during daylight hours. Palestinian delegates said the discussions would break off earlier in the day and resume again at night.

Many other issues remain to be worked out. The discussions at Taba include details in 38 areas of administration that the Palestinians are expected to control for all Palestinians under occupation.

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Syrian Druze clash with Israeli troops in anti-occupation protest

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Druze villagers stoned Israeli border police Monday in the second day of protests shutting down the mountain village of Majdal Shams in the occupied Golan Heights.

Fifteen masked men carrying axes and swords staged a pre-dawn march, shouting slogans against the Israeli occupation.

Both police and villagers said scores of Syrians gathered on the far side of the wire fences separating the two sides, shouting support for the rally through loudspeakers.

The Syrians included the local head of the ruling Baath Party, villagers said. The area is known as the "Hill of Shouts" since relatives on both sides gather to yell news back and forth.

Some of the villagers waved Syrian flags in the demonstrations that started Sunday when scores of men marched

through the village chanting against Israel.

"We do not want citizenship, our citizenship is known. It is Syrian Arab," they said in unison.

Residents said border police broke into several houses Monday, arresting one youth suspected of throwing stones.

They also blocked the main square to prevent a repeat of the march by hundreds of people through the village, where all the stores were shut by a general strike, residents said.

The protests marked the 12th anniversary of their rejecting the Israeli citizenship offered to them after Israel "annexed" the Golan Heights in 1981, after seizing it from Syria in the 1967 Middle East war. Majdal Shams is the largest of the five villages holding about 15,000 Druze in total.

Police confirmed that police entered homes to arrest a youth suspected of throwing

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3 Gazans shot; Hamas pledges more attacks

GAZA CITY, Occupied Gaza Strip (Agencies) — Israeli troops shot and wounded three Palestinian youths Monday on the occupied Gaza Strip, where fundamentalists put up posters claiming the killing of an undercover agent.

The trouble erupted in the Sheikh Radwan neighbourhood of Gaza City where Hamas put up posters proclaiming "Hamas security system beats Israeli security system."

Students threw stones at soldiers who opened fire, witnesses said.

The claim followed Sunday's killing of an Israeli undercover agent from the general security services in an ambush near the West Bank city of Hebron last month. It said attacks planned for the current Holy Month of Ramadan have begun.

Hamas said one of its agents who had penetrated the secret service lured the Israeli officers

was still in force Monday, the army said.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres vowed Monday to pursue peace talks despite the continued killings. "This murder will not damage Israel's peace efforts even if may have the effect of slowing down the peace process."

The Al Qassam brigades said in a leaflet it had dealt "a big blow to the general security services," also known in Hebrew as Chin Bet or Shabak.

Hamas, an opponent of the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) peace deal, said the ambush was in revenge of Israel's killing of four of its members in the West Bank city of Hebron last month. It said attacks planned for the current Holy Month of Ramadan have begun.

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Possible membership in highest law council could advance Rifai's comeback

By Nermene Murad
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Upper House of Parliament's choice today of a representative to the Higher Council for the Interpretation of Legislation — to replace the late former Prime Minister Bahjat Talhouni in the nine-member panel — is of considerable political significance, if only because the strongest candidate for the job is former Prime Minister Zeid Rifai.

Membership in the council is important in itself, since this body, composed of the speaker of the Senate, five senior judges and three senators, is the top arbitration authority on the constitutionality of any legislation and its decision is binding unless revoked by the higher court.

But the election of Mr. Rifai to replace his deceased father-in-law seems to have become the focus of a parliamentary debate, since some members feel it would further strengthen his chances to complete his political comeback probably as prime minister.

According to senators and

other well-informed sources, the Senate has been divided into two camps on the selection of Mr. Rifai for the job:

One in support of Mr. Rifai and another which supports the choice of either former Prime Minister Ahmad Obeidat or former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior Salem Masaideh.

The sources maintain that Mr. Rifai enjoys a clear majority support over these two other candidates. His supporters, in fact, have asked that the choice of candidate be put to vote in today's session precisely because they feel sure of the results.

However, Senate tradition has been that decisions similar to this one are made in the corridors and not put to a vote, but most said they believed that Mr. Rifai's selection is almost sealed.

Politically speaking, the choice of Mr. Rifai alongside the two other senators who are already part of the coun-

siding the country in staggering foreign debts of over \$8 billion.

The 11th Parliament tried to pinpoint Mr. Rifai and other members of his cabinet on charges of corruption but failed to get the two-thirds majority in Parliament necessary to take former senior public officials to court.

His "comeback" has alarmed many of his opponents who have seen him brought back to the Senate and then chosen to become deputy speaker and president of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Senate.

Some analysts have been arguing for some time that Mr. Rifai's return to the Senate and his "close" relationship with the government of Abdul Salam Majali was only the first step in his return as a key player in Jordanian politics, probably as prime minister.

Critics of the choice of Mr. Rifai for membership in the higher council maintain that the council should not be considered as a "political prize" and should be seen as a legal body that requires members with considerable legal expertise.

But behind this academic criticism, some opponents of

he is chosen to the influential council today, these political observers believe, Mr. Rifai would only consolidate his comeback.

Other analysts argue that his return to the Senate and possible appointment to the higher council does not validate theories of his return to the Prime Ministry.

In fact, these analysts say, in the political competition among former and aspirant prime ministers, more is seen in Mr. Rifai's active role in the Senate than is actually taking place.

Sources close to Dr. Majali also maintain that the strong showing of supporters of Mr. Rifai among newly-appointed senators is the result of "coincidence" and not "by design."

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(Continued on page 5)

Zeid Rifai

— former Prime Minister Mudar Badran and Senator Ahmad Tarawneh — is seen as another gain for Mr. Rifai, who stayed outside the political scene since his government was forced out of power after the 1989 riots in the south until his reappointment to the Senate in December last year.

Rioters in the southern part of Jordan called for the dismissal of Mr. Rifai and his government accusing them of mismanagement of funds and

sinking the country in staggering foreign debts of over \$8 billion.

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Deal unlikely to end Yemeni rift

By Assem Abdul Mohsen

Reuter

SANA — Yemen's feuding leaders sign a peace deal next week but their mutual distrust so deep that the accord is unlikely to end a crisis tearing the country apart, political sources say.

Both President Ali Abdullah Saleh and his rival and deputy Vice-President Ali Salem Al Beidh have said they will sign the document in Amman on Feb. 20, pledging full support for the political and economic reforms it contains.

Sheikh Sana Abu Luhoum, an independent member of an all-party committee that negotiated the deal and an influential tribal leader told a television interviewer on Saturday night: "There is simply no trust between the two sides."

Abdul Rahman Al Jeffri, leader of the opposition Yemeni Peoples League and another member of the committee said: "Differences have handicapped the administration. Therefore it cannot and will not do anything."

"We will sign the accord before the eyes of the entire world, but nothing else will happen," Mr. Jeffri said. "After the signing, each side will stick to his pre-signing position and start blaming the other for failing to implement the accord."

The sources said the accord, to be signed by all Yemeni political leaders in and outside the governing coalition, had little chance of success.

The feud had turned personal between Mr. Saleh and Mr. Beidh, the leaders of North and South Yemen respectively who engineered the merger of the two countries in 1990.

Mr. Saleh, an army colonel turned politician who ruled the conservative north part of Yemen from 1978, agreed under the accord to devolve some of his powers to the cabinet and to authorities in the region to appease Mr. Beidh's Yemen Socialist Party.

But the sources said reconciliation was only possible if Mr. Saleh, among other things, loosened his tight grip on the security forces and government purse strings.

Mr. Beidh and his YSP, who

before the merger ran southern Yemen as a Soviet-style one-party state, will have to effectively give up control of southern armed forces that have remained separate almost four years after union.

He would also have to cede control of rich oilfields in southern regions that continue to be run from the southern capital Aden, they said.

"All this looks impossible for the moment. It will take a long time for goodwill to be restored. Neither side is likely to concede any real powers until then," one source said.

An opposition source said: "Nothing has changed. They (the YSP and Saleh's General People's Congress) are paying lip service to the accord to placate public opinion."

"The real problem lies in who has the upper hand in running the country and controlling its resources," the source said.

Mr. Saleh wants Mr. Beidh and YSP ministers and officials, including Prime Minister Abu Bakr Al Attas, to return to Sanaa from Aden on the signing of the accord.

Mr. Beidh, whose party says 154 of its members have been killed since the merger, would like to see a start of implementing the accord before a gradual return to the capital Sanaa.

A northern colonel loyal to Mr. Saleh, Colonel Yahya Al Joubi, was seriously injured on Friday in the latest of a rash of political violence since July, GPC sources said.

Mr. Beidh, addressing a meeting in Aden last week, said he would seek a plebiscite if other partners in the coalition government failed to implement the accord. Apart from the YSP and GPC, the coalition includes the Islamist Islamic Party of Parliamentary Speaker Sheikh Abdullah Ben Hussein Al Ahmar.

Mr. Saleh, in a message to the nation on the occasion of Ramadan which started on Friday called for the opening of a new page.

But one political source said: "The signing will be nothing more than a truce lasting perhaps until the end of Ramadan (mid March)."



An Afghan boy is comforted by his mother while being treated by a doctor at a Red Cross-supported south Kabul hospital. The boy suffers

from abdominal and leg wounds caused by an exploding rocket fired during fighting between rival factions (AFP photo)

Major urges Iran to lift Rushdie death sentence

LONDON (Agencies) — British Prime Minister John Major urged Iran Monday to revoke a five-year-old death edict on writer Salman Rushdie or face continued international isolation.

Mr. Rushdie, 46, has been in hiding under British police protection since his novel "The Satanic Verses" was denounced by Iran as blasphemy against Islam.

"We all want to make clear to the Iranian government that they cannot enjoy full and friendly relations with the rest of the international community unless and until we can be satisfied that there is no further direct or indirect threat from the Iranian authorities to Mr. Rushdie's life or to that of others associated with his book," Mr. Major said in a statement.

"I hope very much that they will listen to the message," said the prime minister, who demonstrated his full support for Mr. Rushdie at a meeting with the Indian-born British author last May that provoked fury in Tehran.

Mr. Major's statement was issued to coincide with the fifth anniversary of the death order, issued in a "fatwa," or edict,

by the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

The book's Japanese translator has been murdered. The Italian translator has been attacked, and last October, Mr. Rushdie's Norwegian publisher William Nygaard was shot and seriously wounded in Oslo.

For five years, Mr. Rushdie has lived under constant protection of Scotland Yard's Special Branch, which still moves him around among an undisclosed number of safe houses.

The author's government protection has so far cost an estimated £5 million (\$7.5 million), of which he is said to have contributed more than \$500,000 of his own money.

On Monday, Rushdie supporters were turned away by the Iranian embassy in London. Monday as they tried to deliver a letter supporting the author.

About a dozen members of the International Rushdie Defence Committee, including opposition Labour Deputy Mark Fisher and British novelist Julian Barnes, tried to deliver a message addressed to Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, asking that he cancel the death sentence.

Sporadic shelling continues in Kabul

KABUL (AFP) — Sporadic shelling rocked residential areas in eastern Kabul Monday amid a growing casualty toll which now tops 16,000 injury cases registered by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Among the incoming rounds were six heavy caliber mortar shells which slammed into the former diplomatic enclave of Wazir Akbar Khan district.

One hit an upper storey balcony and blasted shrapnel inside several rooms, fortunately unoccupied at the time.

The Red Cross estimate of war-wounded includes outpatients treated more than once, during the first 42 days of the 45-day factional fighting.

A further 500 casualties were recorded by the ICRC for January's fighting in the northern capital of Mazar-e-Sharif, with no information available as yet on casualties caused by fighting in western Farah province and a reported outbreak of recent factional friction in southern Kandahar.

The first days of the fasting month which started Friday saw diminished bombardment between factions fighting for and against President Burhanuddin Rabbani in Kabul, but this has not resulted in fewer civilian casualties.

There were 255 patients jammed into the 180-bed Red Cross-supported hospital of Karte Se in south Kabul, where even the children's playroom is packed with wounded.

The plight of children in the Karte Se hospital is pitiful. The youngest patients seen were two girls aged about two years — one had her right arm blown off by rocket shrapnel and the other had lost her left leg.

Another eight-year-old girl suffering body burns lost both her mother and father in a rocket attack, but her distressed aunt asked how this girl's two-day old surviving sister would be fated.

There was still no official Kabul ceasefire despite reports that the warring factions had agreed to hold their fire for the first four days of the Ramadan fast.

"Officially we have no ceasefire," said Defence Ministry officials, who nevertheless acknowledged that peace negotiations were continuing.

"Any future ceasefire will be temporary and conditional," they added.

Gunmen ambush bus carrying Romanians in Egypt

ASSIUT, Egypt (R) — Two gunmen opened fire at a bus carrying eight Romanian and two Egyptian engineers in the south Egyptian city of Assiut at dawn on Monday but no one was hurt, security sources said.

It was the first attack on foreigners in Egypt this year and the first since the militant Gamma Al Islamiyah told tourists and foreign investors earlier this month that they should leave the country for their own safety.

The security sources said some bullets hit the bus and smashed windows.

The driver said he saw two people with pistols open fire from the front and side of the bus. The passengers all lay down on the floor and the bus did not stop, he added.

The engineers, eight Romanians and two Egyptians, work at the Assiut Cement Co. in the city, on the Nile 320 kilometers south of the capital Cairo.

Assiut is one of the centres of the Gamma, the largest violent group trying to overthrow the Egyptian government and replace it with a strict Islamic government.

It started attacking foreigners in October 1992, apparently in an attempt to wreck the tourist industry, one of the country's main sources of foreign exchange.

In a total of 11 attacks so far, three foreigners have been killed and 20 wounded. Three Egyptians have been killed and 50 wounded in the same operations.

The attacks have been a serious blow to the tourist industry, which once brought about \$3 billion a year. Officials say they cost the country about \$900 million in 1993.

More than 300 people have been killed in the wider conflict between violent Islamist groups and the government. Most of them have been policemen and militiamen in southern Egypt.

The last attack on foreigners was on Dec. 27, when gunmen ambushed a tourist bus in central Cairo, wounding eight Austrians and eight Egyptians. Two newspapers said they received claims of responsibility from the Gamma.

The Gamma's first threatened to hit tourism in 1992 but it renewed the threat twice last week in response to a raid in which police shot dead seven of its members in Cairo.

Last week the group planted bombs at three Cairo banks and announced a violent campaign against usury. One of the bombs exploded, causing minor damage.

The government says the militants are mercenaries paid by unnamed foreign countries to wreck the Egyptian economy.

The U.S. embassy, concerned about threats by extremists against foreigners, on Sunday urged Americans to increase their vigilance.

"This is a safe place to live, but it could change," U.S. embassy security officer Robert O'Rien told American expatriots here.

Rien said the embassy was not advising people to leave Egypt or not to visit. His office had no knowledge that specific nationalities, groups or companies were being targeted, he said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Jerusalem to swell to 700,000 population

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — The population of Jerusalem will grow from 565,000 to nearly 700,000 by the end of the century, according to a municipal study published Monday. Sarah Herskowitz, head of the city's strategic planning department based her estimates on land availability for building under current zoning laws. She found 32,000 more housing units could be put up for Jews and 15,000 for Arabs by the year 2000, but that the population growth could be greater if the laws were altered. Some 72 per cent of the population is Jewish and 28 per cent Arab.

Campaign against Sikhs kills 2 in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Gunmen have killed two Sikhs and seriously wounded a third in a violent campaign targeting the Indian community here. Indian Ambassador Prem Singh said Monday. The attacks started on Nov. 3 when gunmen using silencers shot the three Sikhs. There was another murder attempt on a Sikh last Thursday and a shop owned by a Sikh was burned down on Dec. 31, with damages estimated at \$3.36 million. Men also reportedly threatened a store owner on Saturday. The ambassador could not say if the campaign had political or religious motives. Interior Ministry officials told AFP police were trying to track down the culprits, but did not think there was an organised campaign against the 160,000-strong Indian community in Kuwait. Mr. Singh criticised police in the industrial area of Al Shweikh, a western suburb of Kuwait City, for arresting 20 Sikhs before releasing them two hours later after Kuwaiti officials intervened. "Until now we have had no explanation for why they were arrested," the ambassador said. "The Indian community is worried."

Iran protests to Czechs over controversial film

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran protested to the Czech Republic Sunday over the screening on Czech television of the Martin Scorsese film "The Last Temptation of Christ," the official Iranian news agency IRNA said. The protest was conveyed to the Czech ambassador to Tehran, Jiri Oswald, who was summoned to the foreign ministry. The ministry's director-general for Central and Northern Europe, Ebrahim Rahimpour, told Mr. Oswald the Czech government should "not allow the sentiments of Christians and Muslims to be further hurt," IRNA reported. Mr. Rahimpour said he hoped the Czech government would prevent moves against the prophets, which he said were carried out by "international circles, particularly the Zionists." The Czech Catholic Church also condemned the film, which portrays Jesus Christ living an ordinary family life, describing it as an "historical lie."

Qatari TV airs report on embargo-hit Iraq

DOHA (AFP) — Qatari state television has aired a report on Iraqis suffering from international sanctions, the first such programme by a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member since Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. Shot in various Iraqi towns, the first in four episodes focused on complaints by Iraqis about the effects of the sanctions on their daily lives and comments by Iraqi officials. Several of those interviewed said they could not understand why the embargo was being maintained "after Kuwait was returned to the Kuwatis" and called for the Arab states to support Baghdad's position to have the sanctions lifted. Iraqi Trade Minister Mohammad Mahdi Saleh also told the programme that his country opposed a U.N. resolution allowing for the sale of limited quantities of oil under United Nations control. Iraq says the restrictions for the sale harm its sovereignty. Besides Oman, which has always maintained normal relations with Iraq, Qatar is the only GCC country to have restored links with Baghdad after it participated in the U.S.-led coalition that ousted Iraq from Kuwait in February 1991.

Israel wants Thai workers for danger zone

BANGKOK (AFP) — Israel's agricultural cooperative wants to hire 350 Thai workers for its farms in the Gush Katif region south of the Gaza Strip, but has warned they could be in some danger. The Thai foreign ministry said Monday. All workers recruited by the Mosha' movement will be sent to farms near Israel's border with Egypt, where the political situation remains uncertain, a ministry statement said. The workers will stay with their employers and their lives will be insured, but Thais should consider the possible danger and the working conditions before signing up, it said. Those who go will earn \$300 to \$400 a month. The political situation in the region remains unclear while Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation continue to hammer out a peace agreement, it said.

Grenade hurts 1 at party office in Turkey

ISTANBUL (R) — One person was slightly wounded when a hand grenade was thrown into a crowded political party office in Istanbul, police said on Monday. They said an unidentified man tossed the grenade through a window into the crowded office of the pro-Islamic Welfare Party. A party worker was wounded in the neck. The blast shattered windows and damaged furniture, the attacker fled. No one claimed responsibility. The separatist Kurdish Labour Party has claimed responsibility for a time bomb explosion at a train station in suburban Istanbul on Saturday which killed five military cadets and wounded 50 other people.

Piranhas pilfered from Tel Aviv zoo

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Fearless thieves have made off with two dozen red piranhas and a rare parrot from a Tel Aviv zoo, a zoo spokesman said Monday. The six-year-old talking parrot called Riki failed to sound the alert as the burglars broke into "The World of Silence" zoo through an attic window on Saturday night and made off with the carnivorous fish. They left behind a pair of heavy plastic gloves.

Other Flights (Terminal 2)		HIAZ RAILWAY TRAIN
04:28	Vicina (OS)	8:00 a.m. every Monday
16:45	Rome (AZ)	5:00 p.m. every Monday
18:45	Paris, Beirut (AF)	7:30 p.m. every Sunday
19:45	Beirut (ME)	5:00 p.m. every Sunday
20:00	Aden (IY)	
08:30	Bucharest (RO)	
08:15	Amsterdam, Damascus (KL)	
DEPARTURES		MARKEET PRICES
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)		Uppr/lower price in fils per kg.
07:00	Aqaba (RJ)	550 / 650
08:30	Amsterdam, New York (RJ)	680
09:15	Jeddah (add)(RJ)	620
11:15	Montreal, Toronto (RJ)	70 / 40
11:35	Paris, Brussels (RJ)	260 / 300
11:45	Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)	180 / 220
11:45	Geneva, Madrid (RJ)	140 / 180
12:45	London (RJ)	220 / 260
20:45	Cairo (RJ)	180 / 220
20:45	Larnaca (RJ)	180 / 220
20:45	Marrow (large)	180 / 220
20:45	Marrow (small)	300 / 350
21:00	Abu Dhabi (RJ)	700 / 800
22:00	Colombo, Singapore (RJ)	470 / 520
Other Flights (Terminal 2)		Onion (dry) ... 350 / 300
13:50	Venna (OS)	Onion (green) ... 220 / 150
17:45	Dubai (AZ)	Pepper (sweet) ... 380 / 300
21:00	Aden (IY)	Potato ... 250 /

Premier, PSD head discuss security in the Kingdom

AMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali Monday called at the Public Security Department (PSD) discussed with its director a number of matters related to department's requirements

needs to ensure continued guarding of the country's stability. There was another meeting Dr. Al Majali said after a short meeting that Dr. Al Majali images estimated the visit to be reassured by the general security or Ministry officials to ensure the best service against the nation.

Mr. Singh, a westerner, before release they were arrested, community is worried

controversial

to the Czech Republic television of the life of Christ. The protest was organized by Mr. Jiri Oswald, who is the minister of culture. The government should be held responsible against the protest. "International church Catholic Church Jesus Christ has an historical

embargo hit

Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali (left) on Monday visits the Civil Status and Passports Department where he holds talks with department head Nasouh Muhieddin in the presence of (right), Interior Minister Salameh Hammad (Petra photo)

director general, Nasouh Muhieddin, who outlined the department's newly adopted procedures to simplify work and speed up procedures.

The prime minister toured the department's section and inspected their functions and met with a number of citizens, discussing with them a number of matters related to the department's procedures.

Mr. Muhieddin outlined to the prime minister the benefits of registering national code number on the citizens' family books.



HRH Princess Basma
School children, QAF collecting donations for the needy

AMMAN (J.T.) — Hundreds of boy scouts and girl guides along with students from government schools and community colleges Monday roamed the streets of Amman and other cities around the country with specially-marked boxes to collect donations for the poor.

The collection is part of a charity campaign during the month of Ramadan spearheaded by the Queen Alia Fund of Social Development (QAF), to give financial and in-kind aid to the poor families or to finance their small-size, income-generating projects.

Her Royal Highness Princess Basma, who is honorary chairperson of QAF's Board of Trustees, inaugurated the campaign this month, when she distributed relief aid to the needy families in the Mafrak Governorate.

The Princess inspected the progress of the campaign which was underway Monday in Madaba, Marj Al Hamam and Abdala, watching their collection drive.

Later, she talked with the girl guides involved in collecting the donations, voicing her appreciation for their contributions to the charity campaign.

The Princess was accompanied by Minister of Education Khaled Omari and other officials.

A QAF statement said that the campaign, the fourth of its kind this year, aims to confirm the Islamic concept of social solidarity within the Jordanian family, encourage self-reliance and improve the quality of life among the poor.

Upon announcing the campaign before the Ramadan month started, Princess Basma told a press gathering that this year the funds raised would mainly target three major areas of need: rehabilitation and vocational training programmes for heads of needy families, direct in-kind assistance to needy families suffering from malnutrition and poor health and financial aid to educate underprivileged students so that they may pursue higher studies at colleges and universities.

With 45 centres around the country, dedicated to helping the needy, QAF realises the extent of poverty resulting from unemployment and other causes as well as the social and economic conditions of needy families, the Princess explained.

Noting that last year's campaign collected JD 40,000, the Princess expressed hope that this year's efforts would collect double last year's donations.

Deputies 'intend to probe' funds diversion at Ministry of Education

special to the Jordan Times
AMMAN — A number of deputies are planning to officially question Minister of Education Khaled Omari over the diversion of funds from students' contributions to the ministry's budget for purchasing cars for education directors, parliamentary sources have said.

"The Lower House of Parliament (the House of Representatives) intends to probe the matter further in the near future," as lawmakers are still not satisfied with justifications given by Dr. Omari for the diversion of JD 30,000 on the purchase of cars for the and the working ministry's directorates, Islam.

Dr. Omari said that the diversion of fund from the students' contributions was prompted by the lack of funds at the ministry.

Deputy Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh rejected Dr. Omari's justification, saying that the ministry's action is "illegal and the use of contributions should be restricted to school equipment and building maintenance."

He added that students were not responsible for the ministry's lack of funds and that

makers, in response to questions by five deputies, that the amount was used for buying cars which will have a "positive effect" on the process of education and that the measure was essential for ministry officials to carry out their duties.

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He added that students were not responsible for the ministry's lack of funds and that

the minister "cannot tax children on their education."

Mr. Jaber told the Jordan Times the minister had taken no action to reverse his decision and deputies would propose to Dr. Omari to consider the sum as a loan to be paid back, as it "rightfully belongs to students."

Mr. Jaber said that "we have not forgotten the issue," which was first raised in a session of the House a month ago. He said the delay in pursuing the matter was due to the House's preoccupation with debating the food and medicine situation in the country.

"Some ministers try to snatch away citizen's rights and we have to stop such violations," charged Mr. Jaber.

Jordan, Japan to sign \$80m loan deal

development projects at a meeting with Minister of Planning Ziyad Fariz.

The minister voiced Jordan's appreciation to Japan for its continued aid to support Jordan's industrial, services and commercial sectors and the balance of payments over the past five years, in addition to its efforts to reduce the King's foreign debt burden.

Mr. Endo, who arrived Sunday on a three-day visit to Jordan, learnt about the Jordanian economic situation and

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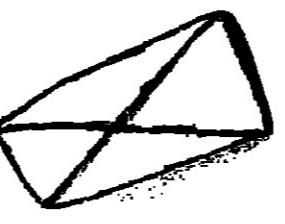
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By Rami G. Khouri

Jordan Times

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Putting out the fire once and for all

THE CONTROVERSY that was triggered by the clash between Deputy Toujan Faisal and her fellow Deputy Jamal Kheirisha is not limited to Parliament. The implications of the clash between the two lawmakers affect the country as a whole. First and foremost, our people look to their representatives' interaction in Parliament as an example that should be followed and emulated by ordinary folks. But the unfortunate episode came as a shock to all of us who have unshaken faith in democracy.

His Majesty King Hussein has repeatedly told his people that democracy begins with the self and cannot be imposed. If Jordanians cannot conduct themselves in the spirit of democracy, and elected parliament members at that, then there is a pressing need to change behavioural attitudes of those who are not ready to shoulder their democratic responsibilities.

Now that this problem has reared its ugly head, Parliament should contain it and seek an equitable solution for it. It is a fact of life that such occurrences sometimes happen in the most advanced nations of the world, but the shocking part about Saturday's incident lies in the fact that we in Jordan are not accustomed to such smear attacks, especially between members of Parliament. The speakers of the Upper- and Lower Houses of Parliament should convene an emergency session to deal with the crisis with a view to preventing any repetition of such incidents. This could be done by putting into effect new norms governing parliamentary debates. One thought comes to mind in this direction. Whenever a new member of Parliament takes the oath of office he or she would be called upon to make a solemn pledge not to abuse their parliamentary privileges and safeguarding the dignity of their function. Other measures could also be introduced with a view to preventing similar clashes. The eyes of Jordanians are focused on the Faisal-Kheirisha standoff and they expect its resolution within the confines of Parliament. Taking the issue to court would do ill-service to the legislative branch of government by showing that our elected representatives are incapable of handling their own affairs. It is the prime responsibility of Parliament to put their own house in order. We expect them to do just that.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i Arabic daily Monday described the PLO-Israeli agreement signed in Cairo recently as a deal between Israel and itself, totally excluding the PLO and disregarding the rights and interests of the Palestinian people. Fahd Al Fanek said that the deal was tantamount to a consent by the PLO to Israel's occupation and continued hegemony over Palestinian affairs. Through the Cairo deal, Israel has secured everything, while the Palestinians got nothing at all, said the writer. Shimon Peres told Israeli Television after the agreement was signed that Israel's interests were safeguarded, noting that the deal ensured continued Israeli security prerogatives and at the same time saved the Israeli government the task of handling the affairs of people considered alien to Israeli society and living as intruders on Israeli land, said Fanek. He said that the Arab masses, who had thought that the declaration of principles concluded in Oslo would pave the ground for the eventual creation of an independent Palestinian state in five years, are now disillusioned and frustrated, he said. Indeed we all have to admit that the deal involved only one party: Israel, because it aims at achieving the goals of the Jewish state one hundred per cent and grant the Palestinians no rights at all, added the writer. Should the Arafat-Peres deal signed in Cairo serve as a model for future deals between the Arabs and Israel, said the writer, then it would be far better for "the occupation" to continue because then it opens the door for the Arab people to openly resist it and carry on the struggle for freedom.

A COLUMNIST in Al Dustour praised Qatar television for presenting a programme that highlights the suffering of the Iraqi people as a result of the U.N. sanctions. It is a brave step on the part of the Qatari government that should be repented by other governments to help lift the sanctions and end the sufferings of the Iraqi people, said Mohammad Kawash. The writer said such courageous steps can help propagate the idea among Arab masses about the need for ending Arab sanctions and also for reestablishing solidarity among the Arab states which he said, face a common fate. The embargo on Iraq, said the writer, is by no means related to the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, which has long ended. Rather it is an American punishment imposed on the Iraqi people and, unfortunately, backed by the so-called international legitimacy. Furthermore, the sanctions on Iraq are causing considerable damage to the Jordanian economy for no reason. The sanctions and the siege on Aqaba have nothing to do with the embargo. On Iraq, and it is regrettable to see the world community doing nothing to help end this injustice to Jordan, continued the writer. He said it has been customary for Jordan to take up the subject of the siege of Aqaba with every guest, including the French foreign minister, and the U.S. secretary of state who, the writer said, has reassured Jordan that the U.S. will look into the Kingdom's grievance.

The View from Fourth Circle

Sunshine and thunder, in 1989 and 1994

Poverty and water are probably the two most serious medium-term threats to stability and progress in Jordan and the rest of the Arab region, and they both deserve far more rigorous, urgent and extensive attention than they are getting today.

To our credit, the poverty issue has been openly discussed at the highest level of government for many years, ever since it emerged as a growing problem in the mid-1980s. Poverty became a major nationwide threat in the period 1988-1991, following the cumulative impact of: a) the collapse of the foreign exchange value of the dinar in mid-1988, b) the introduction of the economic adjustment programme in early 1989, c) the 1990 Gulf crisis, and d) the 1991 Gulf war and repatriation of perhaps over 300,000 Jordanian nationals from the Gulf.

The government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and international development partners have carried out several studies recently to document the extent and causes of poverty. Credible surveys by the Statistics Department indicate that the percentage of families living under the poverty line doubled in the decade of the 1980s, from around 10 per cent to a high of 21 per cent in 1992. (The poverty line was defined as a monthly family income of JD 89 in 1989, and absolute poverty was JD 41; in 1992-93, the poverty line was JD 119 for a family that paid rent, and JD 97 for a family that did not pay rent, and absolute poverty was JD 61).

The situation improved somewhat by 1993, as the Jordanian economy resumed growth and new jobs reduced the unemployment rate. After the government increased salaries for civil servants, the Statistics Department survey showed that 18.3 per cent of families lived below the poverty line in 1993. While this figure is about the same as the poverty level in 1989, the more serious indicator is that the percentage of families living in absolute poverty increased from 1.5 per cent in 1989 to 5.3 per cent in 1993.

Given that the average size of poor families is nine persons per family (compared to 6.4 persons per non-poor family), and given that we have an estimated 120,000 poor families, the total number of people living in poverty in Jordan today is just over one million, of whom over 250,000 persons live in absolute poverty. Not only do we have a relatively large poor class; we also have a growing class of abjectly poor families that are unable to cope in our urban, wage labour, consumer-oriented economy.

There are also serious signs that we may be accepting relatively large-scale poverty as a permanent if vexing reality. It has become common today to see poor people making the rounds of garbage cans in front of homes in better off parts of our large cities and towns; businesses and private homes are routinely approached by indigent persons seeking money, work, or a sense of hope that they can care for their children and families. Theft, crime and dishonesty in businesses are on the rise. Poverty is no longer a shocking novelty; it has become a routine feature of our landscape.

The government and the people of Jordan as a whole are aware of the poverty problem, and we can take pride in the many public and private sector efforts to alleviate the suffering of poor families. At the request of the prime minister, a multi-disciplinary government committee is now formulating a strategy to alleviate poverty. This important work is being personally directed by the Minister of Social Development Mohammad Squor and it deserves widespread public discussion to assure that an effective strategy is formulated to come to grips with the heart of the problem. It is to Dr. Squor's and the government's credit that this strategy is being discussed already among a wide cross-section of Jordanians.

"Allowing nearly one-fifth of Jordanian families and nearly one-fourth of Jordanian individuals to remain mired in a perpetual cycle of poverty and despair will provide fertile breeding grounds for social tension and political extremism."

Reducing poverty is likely to require hard political and economic decisions that will reflect a fundamental change in our national economic and political values. To address the needs of a million or more poor people, we may have to deal with such tough issues as redirecting our health and education expenditures away from higher education and hospital-based tertiary health care, towards primary/basic education, literacy training, and primary health care. Powerful vested interests will oppose such strategic shifts for two reasons: they can make a lot of money from the system's current priorities, and the poor are not organised into a political constituency that can impact on the existing power structure. Yet, the current situation is loaded with social and political dynamite.

Allowing nearly one-fifth of Jordanian families and nearly one-fourth of Jordanian individuals to remain mired in a perpetual cycle of poverty and despair will provide fertile breeding grounds for social tension and political extremism — especially if the suffering of the poor remains extensive or increases, and if the poor are not given the priority they deserve by a political power structure that might feel it can discount them as an invisible community with no political strength.

The economy is unlikely to provide enough new jobs to meet demand among the unemployed and the new entrants to the labour market in the years to come. The economy also remains delicately balanced between dependence and sustainable growth, deeply vulnerable to external factors of aid, trade and political sentiments that can quickly result in higher

unemployment and poverty.

Our experience in April 1989 should remind us always of what reasonable people will do when economic pressures place them and their families in a difficult situation. We can also learn from the recent history of other Arab countries where mass suffering and political marginalisation resulted in severe domestic tension, notably Lebanon, Sudan, Algeria, Somalia and Egypt. We are unlikely to reach such a catastrophic stage in Jordan, given our many national assets. But, in the 1970s and early 1980s we also thought we would never suffer a foreign debt problem or unemployment and poverty rates that hovered around 20 per cent for years on end.

If we have to make hard choices and implement tough new policies to make sure that one in every four Jordanians does not get relegated to the ranks of what some people are already calling the Fourth World — the perpetually powerless and effectively disenfranchised poor who know only suffering and who can look forward only to despair — we have to generate a genuine national consensus on the steps to be taken.

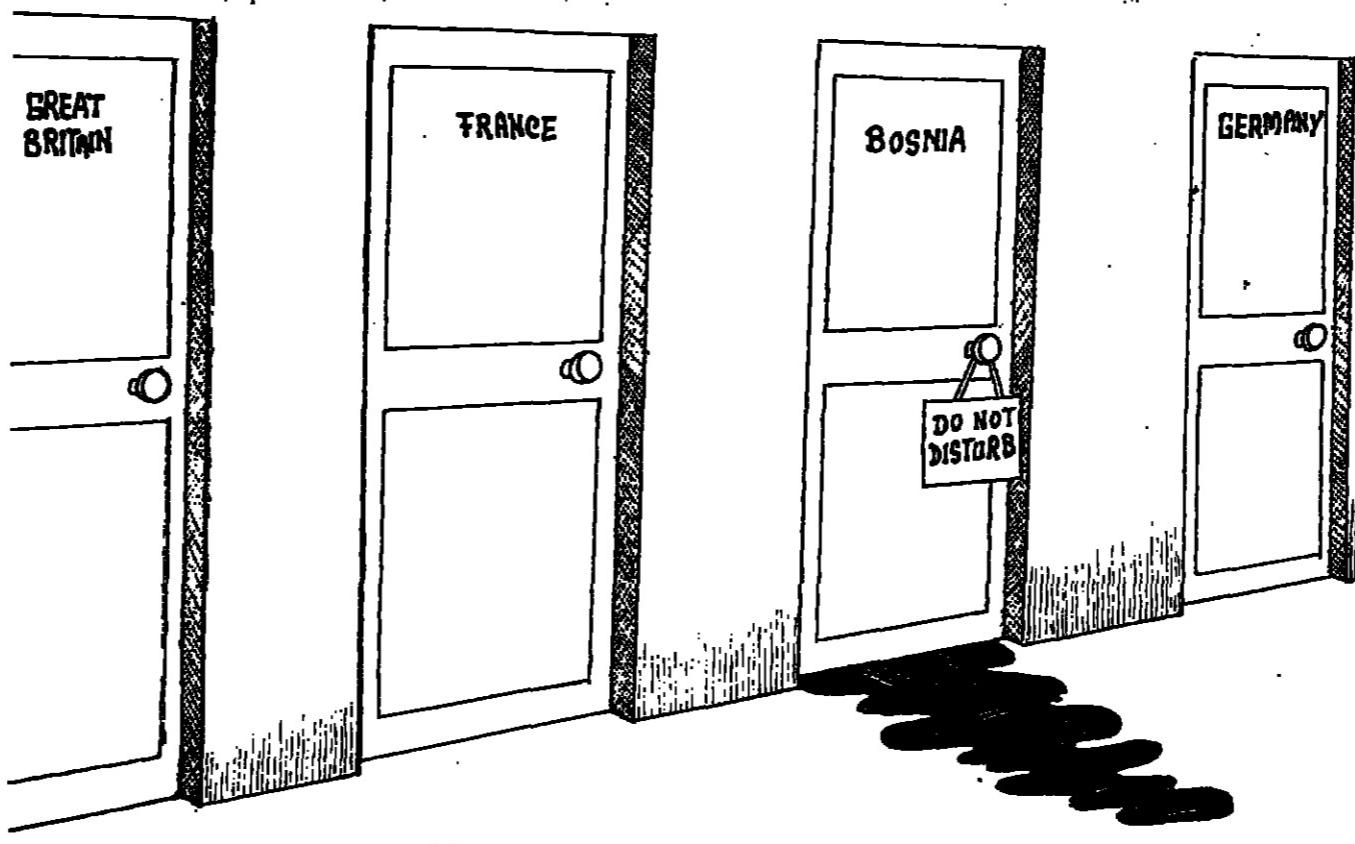
The government and NGOs have taken the lead in this respect in assisting the poor and identifying what needs to be done for a long-term solution. Now it is time for the public as a whole to share in the decisions that will have to be made in the coming few years. This cannot be done only by a perfunctory parliamentary debate or a superficial airing of the problem on the establishment media. It needs a clear presentation of the extent of the problem, its consequences and the nature of the sacrifices that all of us must make to pull our poor compatriots out of their poverty trap.

Parliamentary committees would do well to hold public hearings on the matter, which the state-owned media could televise in full, without discretionary and politically correct editing. We would look quite foolish to hide the reality of poverty under a media figleaf of good news and sunshine, for we would be repeating the same serious mistakes we made in 1988-89 when our media did not adequately address the issues of foreign debt and the exchange value of the dinar.

Schools, universities and community clubs and other local groups have a role to play in discussing poverty. Most importantly, the power structure must gain a more comprehensive understanding of the real nature and pain of poverty, and the poor themselves must be given access to the political decision-making structure. If the public, the political establishment and the poor all join forces in a policy-formulation effort that honours Jordan's modern legacy of compassionate and comprehensive human development, we will have a chance to implement an effective national anti-poverty strategy based on an accurate psychological, sociological and political reading of poverty in Jordan. If not, we will have nobody to blame but ourselves if and when today's sunshine is swept aside by tomorrow's thunder and lightning.

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M. KAHLI



Bosnia tests NATO's credibility

By Nicholas Doughty
Reuter

ROME — As the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) prepares to launch the first combat action in its 45-year history from air bases in Italy, much more is at stake than whether allied warplanes can hit Serb artillery positions around Sarajevo.

For the 16-nation western alliance, which won the cold war without having to fire a shot, the question is whether the use of force will now restore its tattered credibility or whether it will mark a decisive stage in NATO's decline.

"Failure to live up to this undertaking would extract an extremely high price," Italian Foreign Minister Beniamino Andreatta said in a newspaper interview published on Sunday.

"It would call into question NATO's credibility way beyond the Bosnian issue."

NATO Secretary-General Manfred Woerner is fond of boasting that the alliance has never failed and that it will play a vital role in these turbulent times, helping to deal with other Yugoslav-style conflicts in Europe.

Diplomats say that if the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation succeeds in lifting the siege of Sarajevo with its latest threats or through air strikes, where diplomacy has so far failed, it could give NATO the boost it seeks.

clear signal that NATO is able to act when the circumstances require."

It may be NATO's last chance to prove that point.

The alliance threatened last August to use force to break the deadline expires.

NATO diplomats said this

was unlikely because the United States and other Western nations would bring enormous pressure to bear on him if he refused.

But the more worrying prospect is that NATO will, as a result of air strikes, be dragged into a war that it cannot win and which will have enormous human and financial costs — in short, that the alliance will fail in its first combat action.

The main concern is that air strikes will bring retaliation against lightly-armed U.N. troops or relief workers delivering aid in Bosnia.

NATO planes are ready to protect them but, without putting extra combat troops into Bosnia, that protection is limited. The Western allies are not prepared to send in ground forces.

"Air power can achieve only so much on its own," said one NATO military official. "Let's hope we are successful."

As the world's only surviving military alliance, NATO is preparing for joint peacekeeping missions with its former Communist foes in Eastern Europe. Many of them are hopeful they will be able to join the alliance soon.

"If we do it right in Bosnia, we will establish our credibility with good with these people," said one alliance diplomat in Brussels.

"Those who would use force to achieve their aims anywhere else in Europe would get a very

wrong for NATO."

U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali has to give the green light for the first air strike and could, at least in theory, block alliance action after the deadline expires.

NATO diplomats said this

was unlikely because the United States and other Western nations would bring enormous pressure to bear on him if he refused.

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Peace process back on top of Syria's agenda

By G.H. Jansen

DAMASCUS — Now that the tragic death in a car crash of Major Basil Al Assad, the eldest son and heir apparent of President Hafez Al Assad, has been mourned and a consensus on who will ultimately succeed the president seems to have developed, Syria can get back to its main preoccupation, the peace process with Israel.

The Syrians have almost reached the point of accepting that the Israelis are never going to concede on the Golan Heights — no return, no peace — and Israel will not budge and inch in refusing to return the Golan, only at best the smaller portion of it.

The Syrians have almost reached the point of accepting that the Israelis are never going to concede on the Golan. The Syrians will accept this position because they will have no choice. But Israel will not get the peace which it wants: "The Arabs cannot make war without Egypt and cannot make peace without Syria." For how long more would Syria be prepared to go on with the present fruitless exercise? — Perhaps another half year.

A recent display of Israel's stubborn arrogance has further convinced the Syrians that what is going to happen. They noted the way in which the Israelis slapped their great and good friend U.S. President Bill Clinton in the face when they rubbished his claim that Syrian clarifications at the Geneva summit of what Syria meant by fully peace and normalisation were "new" and "very important", which is exactly so. And having been slapped, Mr. Clinton, like a good Christian, turned the other cheek, when a few days ago, his secretary of state announced officially that the U.S. was not going to pressure Israel to withdraw from the Golan.

But because the Israelis, like that other difficult and dangerous people, the Serbs, only make concessions when under pressure, where is the pressure on Israel going to come from when the U.S. has opted out? Perhaps from the Palestinian people in the occupied territories who, individually, are killing individual Israelis on an almost daily basis. That would explain why Damascus is the headquarters of no less than 10 "rejectionist" Palestinian groups which oppose the peace process and particularly the Oslo accord. It would also explain why Damascus refuses to curb the pro-Iranian Hezbollah, which maintains pressure on Israeli forces occupying parts of southern Lebanon. The message from Damascus is clear: If there is no peace, there will be an Arab war of attrition against Israel in occupied Arab territories.

The writer is a Cyprus-based journalist specialised in Islamic and Middle Eastern affairs.

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Features

JORDAN TIMES, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1994 5

South Africa The continent's emerging giant

By Mark Fritz
The Associated Press

I remind us always of economic pressures, of our situation. We can't afford to let it go on. Arab countries, we can't afford to let it go on. Algeria, Saudi Arabia, etc. But in the long run, we will never succeed in poverty unless we implement tough policies. Four Jordanian people are actually poor, and we have to generate more jobs to be taken.

"Our historic partners from Europe have turned resolutely towards South Africa. They no longer want to make new investments in our country," said Guido Sabi de Tove, director-general of a pasta factory in Togo, a west African military dictatorship.

Nowhere is the feeling stronger than in Nigeria, home to one in five black Africans, an oil-rich country that has long dreamed of leading the continent.

Well to hold its own in the world, not politically, but also to hide the reality of global news, it did not adequately exchange value.

clubs and other issues, leaving poverty to gain a more complete and man of power access to the political system. It will have a chance strategy based on political reading to blame it is swept aside.

In 1992, Nigeria received more direct private foreign investment than the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa combined.

Beyond the loss of national and individual pride, the steady march of South Africa towards elected government will also lead to erosion in the economic support base for Nigeria abroad," said Okeyewonu, a prominent banker in Lagos. "More foreign investment will go to South Africa to our own detriment."

There already is evidence of a giant sucking sound in the southern part of this massive continent.

Nations such as Ghana, Senegal, Congo and Zaire have reported a migration of skilled labour in search of brighter prospects down south.

The South African embassy in Abidjan, the only one in west Africa, said it is flooded with up to 1,000 visa requests monthly, many from people looking for jobs or wanting to buy goods to sell back home.

"We get a lot of people who go down and don't seem to come back," one embassy official said, on condition of anonymity. He said districts of French-speaking west Africans have sprung up in South Africa.

Three hundred Ghanaians were arrested in South Africa five months ago with false travel documents.

The irony is that Ghana, which in 1957 was the first African colony to gain independence, is considered an emerging success story after years of restructuring under the International Monetary Fund.

"The rest of Africa," Alain Mr. Moses said, a sur-



ABOUT TO LEAD: Reconciliation in South Africa promises the country leadership of the continent. In the photo, South African President F.W. de Klerk is greeted by a tribal South African leader (AFP photo)

is already marginalised," said Gerald Sowali, an engineer who owns Grace Investment Ltd., a Ghanaian construction firm.

"Europe and America are looking at South Africa rather than west and central Africa. Frankly, in most Sub-Saharan African countries, we are also looking to South Africa as our business partner."

He believes South Africa will provide tough competition for the European, Asian and U.S. firms that dominate import and construction markets in Africa.

Sowali, who is building a cellular telephone system in Swaziland, is negotiating with South African construction firms to put together projects in Ghana.

"Before, I was only looking at Americans," he said. "South Africa is going to take a big chunk of business which was only American and European."

Because of its superior infrastructure, developed mineral wealth and relatively well-trained work force, South Africa will compete on a far higher plane than the rest of the continent, said Michel Aboodian, dean of business management at the University of Benin in Lome, Togo.

"South Africa will never have competition for the other African countries because they don't have the advanced technology South Africa has," said Maurice Kamdon, co-owner of a food-and-beverage import business in Yaounde, capital of Cameroon.

South Africa is probably approaching the emerging markets in Eastern Europe, Latin America and Southeast Asia more vigorously than it is those of Africa's debt-ridden, aid-dependent countries.

Proud Nigerians wonder what people will think.

"Our concern is that South Africa's pro-democracy march will soon expose Nigeria's lacklustre response to install democracy," said Clement Nwankwo, executive director of the Investor Responsibility Research Centre Inc. in Washington, D.C.

Alain Mr. Moses said, a sur-

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Mr. Moses believes a stable, prosperous, black-governed South Africa probably will provide as many benefits as drawbacks for the continent.

"If Nigerians are concerned about it, I suppose they would be best served by looking at their own problems," he said.

Others feel what's good for South Africa is good for Africa.

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It will be easier to cooperate with South Africa than compete with it, he said.

From Lagos, Nigeria, 4,800 km away, once-hated South Africa looks like the stuff of dreams realised by somebody else.

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Economy

JORDAN TIMES, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1994

Egypt cuts tariffs under IMF plan

CAIRO (R) — The Egyptian government has cut import duties on a wide range of goods, many by 10 percentage points, as part of the economic reform package agreed with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The cuts are the third since 1991, when a first IMF agreement came into effect.

They have been under negotiation inside Egypt for months, with local industries saying they need to keep their tariff protection and other groups arguing that lowering the duties will reduce prices for consumers.

Finance Minister Mohammad Al Razaz told reporters the new rates gave local industry enough protection while at the same time cutting rates for essential commodities.

The duty on cement, one of the most controversial items, has fallen from 50 per cent to 20 per cent for bagged cement and 10 per cent for loose cement.

The duty on refined sugar goes down to 15 per cent from 20 per cent and on raw sugar to five per cent from 10. Egypt's

own sugar industry covers less than half of consumption.

The reductions took effect Monday morning.

Local industrialists failed in their attempt to push up the duty on imports of steel reinforcement bars, which remains at 20 per cent. They had asked for 30 per cent.

But publishers succeeded in their campaign to reduce the duty on paper, which comes down to 10 per cent from 15.

The ministry of agriculture had wanted to cut the duty on fertiliser imports but this is unchanged at 30 per cent.

For a wide range of consumer goods, such as small cars, household appliances and some electronic equipment, the new duty is 70 per cent instead of 80.

The government described 70 per cent as the new maximum tariff rate, though in fact there are higher rates for large cars, alcohol and other items considered to be luxuries.

Over the next few years, the government is to compress the range of duties even further and cut the number of exemptions.

Belarus premier urges return to Soviet-style economy

MINSK (R) — Belarusian Prime Minister Vyacheslav Kebich has urged a return to Soviet-style economic measures including fixed food prices and an end to all talk of shock therapy.

He said monetary and economic union with Russia was the only way to save the Belarus economy.

"Those who called for 'shock therapy' and wanted to speed up our moves towards a market economy are mistaken. We were in too much of a hurry and we need to go back," Mr. Kebich said in a televised speech Sunday night.

The premier said the government would soon ban "speculative trade" and regulate food prices by cabinet decree.

Belarus is one of the most conservative former Soviet republics. The government has privatised only three per cent of state property, well below levels in neighbouring Russia.

Iran plans new refineries

NICOSIA (R) — Iran, whose oil consumption has been rising rapidly, is planning two new refineries, an official said.

The Iranian news agency IRNA quoted deputy oil minister for engineering projects, Habib Aminfar, as saying that a new \$1.3 billion refinery at Bandar Abbas will come on stream during the second five-year plan which starts on March 21.

He said it will have an output of 232,000 barrels per day (b/d). Mostafa Khoee, director of offshore production at the National Iranian Oil Co., said in January the refinery would be finished in two years and have an output of around 300,000 b/d.

Mr. Aminfar said another plant at Asalouyeh, which Iranian oil officials have also referred to as the Bandar Taheri Refinery, will change 70,000 b/d of crude into various oil products."

Rome puts to rest 'day of rest' shopping rule

ROME (AP) — Romans were carrying something new on Sunday: Shopping bags.

The first day of a city code allowing seven-day-a-week commerce brought grimaces from traditionalists. But it put grins on the faces of many consumers relieved that Rome was finally joining other European capitals in relaxing "day of rest" rules.

"What a difference," said Giorgio Fonda, coming out of a department store with a Valentine's Day gift of perfume for his wife. "I have news for those against Sunday shopping: People work during the week. Sunday is the only day we can shop."

But opponents of Sunday shopping saw problems ahead.

Many small shop owners — who make up a large share of Rome's business community — say they'll be forced to work every day to compete. They argue that only large retailers have enough employees to staff the extra day.

Some people also complain that consumerism is being elevated over religion and tradition.

The Vatican didn't rail against the change Sunday. But after Mayor Francesco Rutelli signed the law Feb. 2, the Vatican newspaper L'Espresso Romano carried a commentary saying that Sunday was a day of rest and reflection — a tradition worth

preserving.

"Sunday is for church and family, not trying on clothes," said Maria Cinini, walking along a main shopping thoroughfare.

It appeared, however, that few merchants decided to take advantage of the first legal Sunday of business. A group that pushed for Sunday shop hours estimated about 10 per cent of businesses opened.

Rome's shopping ordinance was allowed as an exception to a nationwide ban on Sunday shopping, and is being watched closely by other Italian cities considering similar measures.

The mayor said he believed that Sunday business hours will help promote tourism, which has declined slightly in Italy.

"For those who come to Rome, it's important to know that the monuments are not the only things open on Sunday," he said.

Many other European countries have come under pressure to loosen traditional Sunday closing laws. Britain and Sweden have eased the regulations, while France and Germany have resisted major reforms.

Spain is going the other way. Under pressure from small merchants, its parliament passed a law this month allowing regions to override national laws requiring that stores be open at least eight Sundays or holidays a year.

Clinton says economy can keep on growing

WASHINGTON (R) — The U.S. economy should have enough vigour to continue growing for the rest of the decade if interest rates stay low, despite the braking effect of budget deficit reduction, President Bill Clinton told Congress Monday.

This overcame the effect of the government spending less on goods and services.

"Hence the economy should be able to grow right through the deficit reduction period," as long-term rates stay low, said the report prepared by the president's Council of Economic Advisers, chaired by Laura D'Andrea Tyson.

In the report, the White House takes much of the credit for lower interest rates, saying the budget-deficit-cutting law passed last summer created a credible environment for lower rates by reducing the demand for credit and showing fiscal discipline.

The report said the current level of long-term interest rates appeared sustainable. "Clearly, if inflation remains under control, bond yields have some way to fall to come into line with their historical real averages," it said.

But the report also warned that economic growth can be imperilled by taking deficit reduction too far.

According to the Abu Dhabi-based Arab Monetary Fund (AMF), intra-Arab trade dropped by 14 per cent, in 1991 due to the Gulf war and it

Jordan eases controls on foreign transfers

AMMAN (R) — Jordan has further eased foreign transfer controls on funds for personal needs and reexport credit in a move to boost confidence in the economy, a central bank official said Monday.

The central bank's new move is in the direction of further liberalising restrictions on foreign currency, consolidating confidence and boosting the dinar's exchange rate.

Ahmad Abdul Fattah, an assistant Central Bank governor, told Reuters.

The official, in charge of banking supervision, said new instructions sent to banks recently raised to 35,000 dinars (\$49,710) from 20,000 dinars (\$28,400) a year ceiling on personal transfers of medical educational, or family expenses.

The limit was imposed after a sharp devaluation of the dinar in 1989, sparked by an

economic crisis.

Mr. Abdul Fattah said the Central Bank was encouraged to ease the ceilings on transfers because this will "have a positive effect on confidence in the national economy."

Other new measures included abolishing money guarantees on reexported goods, all controls on non-resident foreign currency accounts and allowing loans in foreign exchange provided by local banks for imports of shipment goods.

Jordan is boosting its role as a free trade reexport centre for goods to Iraq and neighbouring states after Middle East peace and the lifting of U.N. economic sanctions on Iraq.

"We have cancelled a guarantee paid by importers on reexported goods amounting to 10 per cent of their value, which will increase importers competitive advantage by re-

ducing reexport costs," Mr. Abdul Fattah said.

Banks still need to notify the Central Bank of amounts in foreign exchange equivalent value to reexported goods, which importers need to prove they brought back to preserve the country's foreign reserves.

The official foreign exchange and gold reserves stood at a healthy 1.02 billion dollars (\$1.44 billion) at end of November 1993 after being in the red in 1989.

The Central Bank also raised to 1,000 dinars (\$1,410) ceiling on the value of goods which importers need not deposit its foreign exchange equivalent in banks.

But it will continue to let Jordanians move investment capital abroad only on a case by case basis. Bankers estimate Jordaniains hold \$7 billion in assets and deposits abroad.

British exports to Arab Gulf States rise by 14.3%

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Britain's exports to wealthy Arab Gulf states surged by more than 14 per cent in the first nine months of 1993 as a decline in the pound boosted demand for British products, a report showed Monday.

The exports to the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) stood at \$4.46 billion between January and September 1993 compared with \$3.9 billion in the same period of 1992, an increase of 14.3 per cent, according to the report by the joint Arab-British Chamber, obtained here.

Britain has sought to promote exports to the region by staging exhibitions although it is already among the five biggest trading partners of GCC states — Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The GCC is one of the biggest consumer markets in the world, with imports exceeding \$50 billion in 1992.

Japan is the top commercial partner of the GCC, with a two-way trade of \$36 billion in 1992.

Saudi Arabia, by far the largest Gulf market, emerged as the top importer from Britain, receiving products worth nearly \$2 billion. Exports to the UAE, the second market for Britain, stood at \$1.44 billion.

Export financing needed to boost inter-Arab trade

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab states should create bodies to finance exports if they want to support their flagging internal trade as part of attempts to integrate their economies, an official study said Monday.

Some Arab countries have embarked on plans to set up institutions to guarantee national exports while others are considering following suit as they press ahead with reforms to repair their ailing economies, said the study by the Arab Corporation for Investment Guarantee (ACIG).

"The establishment of a network of export guarantee agencies in Arab countries, supported by the guarantee systems in ACIG and the Islamic Corporation for Financing Trade, will create a wide base for cooperation and this will give a strong push of efforts to develop inter-Arab trade," the Kuwait-based group said in a study, received here.

Lack of financial support for Arab exports is among the main reasons blamed for the low trade among the Arab League's 22 members and for a persistent trade and balance of payments in most Arab nations.

Other factors include political differences, problems related to storage and transport, and high customs tariffs among Arab states despite a long-standing free trade zone agreement.

ACIG, another main Arab League group, was set up around 15 years ago to guarantee investment but began to focus on financing exports in the

past few years to bolster international trade. Operations related to trade transactions now account for more than 70 per cent of its activities.

"Setting up financing agencies should be coupled with mechanisms for the exchange of information among Arab states about the financial adequacy and commercial reputation of importers to enable those agencies to better assess risk to be covered," ACIG said.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY FEBRUARY 15, 1994

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation
GENERAL TENDENCIES: This isn't the morning to hold those discussions with associates or to make those long-term plans definite since the Aries Moon squares Neptune and Uranus and Mars is squaring Jupiter too.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Discuss with allies how mutual projects can be improved. Try to understand better what they have on their minds. Sit down and write to those who have data you require, don't procrastinate since it will take time.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Keep busy with financial affairs that are important to your welfare now. Listen to what a professional has to say that will be helpful to you.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Stating your aims to the right today can bring you the assistance you want and make you a more successful person.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You are able to handle those personal matters with relative ease now, start on them early. An attachment is most affectionate tonight.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Concentrate on social activities now and plan for future events your private affairs need to be taken care without delay. Show that you are an interesting and energetic person.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) See what you can do to have a more pleasing image both

THE Daily Crossword

by Henry Selzinger

CROSSWORD

1 Lima 2 land 5 Clean, in a way 9 Proto or cyto follower 14 Wall of bricks 15 Uncouth 16 Region of ancient Greece 17 Landmark 20 Doddering 21 Senses 22 Oceans 24 Delicat fish 25 Corporate letters 28 Friars 30 Grief 34 City dweller 36 Holy one 37 Mysterious 38 Holistic 40 Grief 41 Red ore 42 Massachusetts 43 Photo word 43 Yang's opposites 45 Actress 48 Thompson 49 Rotisserie 50 Redaction 52 Directors, for short 53 Sufficient 57 Certain love 59 Hollandaise 60 Copycat 61 Delatorify remark 62 Originate 63 Goblet 64 Doubts the motor 66 Doubts a fare 67 Click!

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Peanuts



Andy Capp



Zulu king lays claim to kingdom

DURBAN, South Africa (AFP) — Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini laid claim Monday to the sovereignty of the Zulu kingdom as it existed in 1834, before it was conquered by the British.

He told tens of thousands of spear-wielding supporters at a rally here before meeting South African President F.W. De Klerk that negotiations had failed to secure a just future for the Zulu nation and that he had "come to the end of the road."

It will be the third meeting in a month between the two men to discuss the future of the Zulu kingdom under a new post-election constitution rejected by King Zwelithini and Kwazulu Chief Minister Mangosuthu Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP).

According to a copy of a memorandum to be presented to Mr. De Klerk obtained by AFP before the meeting, King Zwelithini said he was preparing "to promulgate the constitution of Kwazulu and Natal which will establish a monarchy modelled after the best examples of democratic and pluralistic monarchies in the world."

By the pre-1834 boundaries the king is understood to mean a territory of some eight million people, including six million Zulus, stretching from the Drakensberg Mountains in the west of the Indian Ocean in the east.

The king tells De Klerk in

the memorandum "the time has come for difficult and irreversible decisions," and challenges him with the options of choosing "the path of liberation" or allowing "our opponents to attempt to crush my kingdom and the freedom and liberation of my people by means of violence and destruction."

In Cape Town, shortly before leaving for Durban, Mr. De Klerk said the alliance's decision to boycott the poll was a "serious problem" but ruled out postponing the election date.

He told the opening session of an International Press Institute (IPI) conference that his government would "continue to do everything we can to address their reasonable concerns, but we will not allow them to thwart the determination of the overwhelming majority of South Africans to proceed with the election."

Mr. Buthelezi warned Sunday that his party's boycott was likely to bring "casualties and even death."

According to a recent independent poll, the ANC enjoys 51 per cent support in Kwazulu and surrounding Natal, against 23 per cent for the IFP.

"Changing the date is not on the agenda," Mr. De Klerk said in a speech before hundreds of journalists attending IPI's general congress.

He said his government would continue to negotiate with the conservative freedom alliance "but we will not allow them to thwart the determination of the overwhelming

majority of South Africans to proceed with the elections."

Alliance leaders say the government and the African National Congress (ANC) have not gone far enough to satisfy their federalist ambitions, especially white extremists' demands for a whites-only homeland.

The AVF has threatened to actively disrupt voting, a threat echoed by IFP lead Mansoush Buthelezi Sunday.

But Mr. De Klerk said Monday that his government would deal "firmly and decisively" with any attempts to undermine the polls.

"What we cannot accept is a return in any form to racial discrimination and minority ethnic domination," he said.

ANC leader Nelson Mandela, also addressing the Congress, echoed Mr. De Klerk's commitment to the April 26-28 poll, saying that "those who want to delay the birth of a democracy assume an awesome responsibility and should be aware of the terrible risks their actions entail."

He said the new leadership's goal should be to "rebuild" South Africa on the ruins of apartheid, which has burdened the country "with scandalous levels of poverty which translates into 17 million people — all blacks — existing below the minimum living level."

Mr. Mandela said that one of the main priorities of an ANC-led government would be to create jobs.

Seoul sees positive signs from North about nuclear impasse

SEOUL (AFP) — There are signs that North Korea will reverse its refusal to allow outside inspections of its nuclear facilities. South Korea's president said Monday, as Russian scientists revealed that Pyongyang has developed a nuclear bomb.

South Korean President Kim Young-Sam told Japanese Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa by hotline, that he was hopeful that Pyongyang would agree to the inspections.

Mr. Kim's spokesman, Choo Don-Shik said: "There is a high possibility that North Korea would resume working-level contacts with the United States in New York this week and convey its willingness (to accept the inspections)," Mr. Han said.

North Korea is expected to show a positive response (regarding nuclear verification inspections) in the coming days," Mr. Han said.

Meanwhile, a senior Republican member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, the Clinton administration Sunday to weigh sending nuclear weapons to South Korea to thwart any threat from the North.

John McCain of Arizona, a former navy pilot who is generally cautious on military matters, said the United States should "seriously consider returning of nuclear weapons to South Korea... for our tactical air forces there."

Sen. McCain made his comments on the CNN programme Late Edition. Defence Department officials say former President George Bush began removing U.S. tactical nuclear weapons from South Korea in 1991 and that none currently remain.

Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Sam Nunn said Sunday that it was time for the United States to "start planning and discussing sanctions" against the North.

They also indicated they would seek phased rather than immediate wholesale sanctions against North Korea if the issue were referred to the Security Council.

Both South Korea and Japan feared that Pyongyang could go to war if backed into a corner, and Mr. Han has urged caution on the imposition of sanctions.

North Korea has said it would consider the imposition of "punitive measures" and an act of war.

North Korea said over the weekend that Washington had recently told Pyongyang that it wanted to resolve the nuclear issue through dialogue, and that Pyongyang also wanted a peaceful solution.

Both South Korea and Japan

told government leaders that he had let Mr. Clinton know Japan wanted China to mediate the dispute and that it was important for South Korea, Japan and the United States to band together to ask China.

China, which has close ties to North Korea, is the least enthusiastic of the permanent Security Council members about imposing sanctions on Pyongyang.

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Near naked samba dancers kick off Rio carnival

RIO DE JANEIRO (R) — Barechested men and women wearing only minuscule loincloths gyrated to the rhythms of samba astride a giant float Sunday night as Rio De Janeiro's glittering carnival parade got underway. The parade competition, which lasts until dawn and continues Monday night, is the highlight of Rio's pre-Lenten carnival, which began last Thursday and ends on Ash Wednesday. The Unidos Da Ponte school kicked off the annual tradition with a tribute to one of Brazil's most beloved samba singers, Alcione, one of the most eagerly awaited school this year was Mangueira, which was to march early Monday morning. The school, traditionally the city's most popular, will pay tribute to four of Brazil's best known singers — Caetano Veloso, his sister Maria Bethania, Gilberto Gil and Gal Costa. The foursome spearheaded the 1960s tropicalism movement of music popularised around the world. Brazilian President Fernando Collor came to see and hear Mangueira, marking the first time a president attended the parade at the nearly mile-kilometre-long Sambadrome. The school this year has promised to put on a show as luxurious as ever, even though the gambling bosses who bankroll most of the schools are behind bars.

Britons indulge in Valentine's Day slush

LONDON (R) — Lovesick Britons indulged in their customary display of Valentine's Day eccentricity Monday.

Daddy Big Belly sent his regards to Big Momma and Shugie pledged undying affection for Pattie Poops.

In a separate development, two North Korean truck drivers, who had fled from a logging camp in Siberia, have asked for asylum after flying to South Korea from Moscow, intelligence officers said Monday.

Major urged to drop 'back to basics'

LONDON (R) — Prime Minister John Major is under strong pressure to abandon his discredited "back to basics" crusade to save the Conservative government any more morality scandals, British newspapers said Monday.

Senior Conservatives now admit that Mr. Major's flagship campaign for wholesome values has backfired on the government, laying it open to mockery over any individual failing or misdemeanour, the newspapers said.

The Daily Express said Monday the latest stain on the government's character, a weekend furore over a Conservative politician's friendship with a young researcher, had sounded the death knell for back to basics.

"Mr. Major should dump back to basics and get back to politics," the Today newspaper said in an editorial.

Other newspaper also quoted senior Conservative sources as saying the crusade, conceived late last year as a

non-contentious way of rallying the squabbling party behind Mr. Major, had been acknowledged as a miscalculated move.

The campaign called for a return to traditional values and, although the government says it was never about personal morality, encouraged the popular press to delve deep into the lives of conservative politicians to find any moral lapses.

Critics have said the debacle reveals Mr. Major's poor judgement in choosing such a vague concept as his policy theme and allowing right-wingers in the government to link "basics" in the public mind with personal morality.

In the first major blow to the crusade, a junior environment minister was forced to resign his job in January after admitting fathering a love child during an extra-marital affair.

Then another minister stepped down amid reports his wife's suicide was prompted by his friendship with another

woman.

The campaign, now redefined by the government as a concern for "commonsense" values in education and law and order, was left in total disarray last week when an up-and-coming politician Stephen Milligan was found asphyxiated at his home after what appeared to be a bizarre sexual experiment.

In the latest blow to back to basics, Conservative Member of Parliament Harley Booth stepped down as a ministerial aide in the Foreign Office late Saturday as newspapers splashed reports of his love for a 22-year-old researcher who used to work as a nude art model.

The Guardian newspaper said senior Conservatives had decided to abandon attempts to salvage the campaign and intended to let the slogan slip quietly into disuse.

But other reports said the government felt it would be too damaging to abandon the policy platform now.



Aid flights resume in Angola

LISBON (AP) — Angola's UNITA rebels opened the besieged city of Cuito to emergency food flights for the first time in a week Monday, but closed a second desperate city with a storm of artillery when U.S. Senate fact-finders tried to visit.

Under intense U.N. and U.S. pressure, UNITA agreed not to fire on airfields to Cuito and other government cities while the government in turn lifted a ban on aid to rebel-held areas, a relief official said.

The airfields were halted a week ago when a four-month unofficial ceasefire collapsed and fierce artillery battles broke out throughout the central highlands.

"This deal couldn't have come much later for those people to survive," said the relief worker of the 60,000 Angolans trapped in Cuito, 670 kilometres (415 miles) south-east of Luanda, which has been surrounded by rebel forces for more than a year.

The government estimates rebel shells killed 300 people in Cuito in four days. UNITA said more than 100 were killed by a government bombing of neighbouring rebel-held Huambo, once Angola's second-largest city.

But relief flights to Malange, one of the city's hardest-hit by Angola's war-caused famine, were scratched when the rebels suddenly unleashed a dawn artillery bombardment.

Although given rebel safety guarantees to land, three members of a U.S. Senate staff delegation had to cancel a visit to Malange when rebel artillery pounded the airfield hours before they were to arrive, an embassy official said.

This is the second time UNITA has aborted a trip by congressional investigators to the besieged city 350 kilometres (415 miles) south of Luanda. In December, four members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee were in flight to Malange when rebel artillery began pounding the airfield.

"We don't think this is by chance," said a Western diplomat, speaking anonymously in accordance with ministry policy. "UNITA apparently doesn't want to see how bad things are in Angola."

Tougher sanctions against Haiti readied

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States and three other nations plan a new series of tougher sanctions to force democracy on the poor Caribbean nation, a Clinton administration official said.

U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Madeleine Albright said on NBC's Meet The Press programme that the United States, France, Canada and Venezuela were preparing this week to promote a package of tighter sanctions against

Haiti.

"We are looking again at a tougher set of sanctions which really has three parts to it, has to do with air travel, targeted sanctions against certain parties there and an overall trade embargo," she said.

"We are in the process of negotiating it," she said.

Human rights activists last week urged President Bill Clinton to raise pressure on Haiti's military regime to step down by barring U.S. imports of all

goods assembled in Haitian plants.

They told reporters that

more than 50 U.S. firms bring

into the United States a variety of goods assembled in Haiti,

including baseballs, clothing,

floor tiles and fishing lures.

"We are in the process of negotiating it," she said.

They said a United Nations

embargo on fuel and weapons

shipments to Haiti was leaking

baddy, harming Haiti's poor

but not the military leaders it

was intended to force from

office.

Prabhakaran. We have not

closed the door for peace, but

Prabhakaran is silent.

Mr. Wickremesinghe told a public rally in central Kotmale region Sunday.

He said 14 months of talks

with the LTTE ended in failure

in June 1990, leading to more

bloodshed, and he added that

after that debacle all political

parties agreed that Mr. Prabhakaran must be directly involved with any talks.

"No political party has

changed that position. We do

not want to discourage anyone

from talking. But any serious

move must come from Prabha-

karan himself and no one else

in the LTTE," he said.

"Am I the only person in the

world disturbed by cosmic love

bunnies who talk each other

into bed using Beatrix Potter

pet names?" she asked, sug-

gesting Britons may have a

problem facing up to their feel-

ings.

Sports

Belarus player wins Virginia Slims tourney

CHICAGO (AP) — Natalia Zvereva, whose tennis success has been shaped more by doubles, was not sure if she would ever win a singles title again. It had been four years, and even though she is only 22, she didn't like her chances.

"It's not that I didn't believe in myself," the Belarus player said Sunday after winning the Virginia Slims of Chicago 6-3, 7-5 over Chanda Rubin. "The competition is so much better now."

"I proved myself wrong," said Zvereva, who used a steady serve and a variety of shots, including a low-to-the-ground slice backhand to offset the hard ground strokes of the 17-year-old Rubin.

"She didn't like the low balls, especially to her backhand," Zvereva said. "I tried to keep the pace off. It helps a lot on a fast surface. A lot of girls hit balls deep, flat and hard. Sometimes it's not wise to hit it harder."

Zvereva, ranked second in the world in doubles and 19th in singles, took a 5-0 lead in the first set as Rubin, who won only two points in the first four games, sprayed errors all over the University of Illinois-Chicago Pavilion supreme surface.

But trailing 0-5 and love-40 after back-to-back double faults, Rubin lost her nerves and began to hit out in her first major tour final. The errors turned into winners as she fought off the three set points and then won three straight games.

"I couldn't get into the match early on," Rubin said. "I

was missing a lot of balls. After going down love-five, I hit a good ball for a point and I said to myself, 'Why not go for it now, you've got nothing to lose?' And I won the next three games."

Zvereva finally won the set 6-3 when Rubin, who had fended off two more set points in the ninth game, hit long.

Zvereva broke for a 3-2 lead in the second set, but Rubin broke right back, tying the set with top spin lob and then holding for a 4-3 lead when Zvereva twice hit long and made another backhand error.

Zvereva then made two tough volleys to win the next game. But Rubin, who hit serves timed at 166 kph, came up with three strong serves in a row to escape a 0-30 hole and take a 5-4 lead.

Zvereva held for 5-5, then broke Rubin at love with a backhand winner down the line and three straight Rubin errors. The third one a swinging volley into the next.

"I went up 5-4. I started making a lot of errors. I don't know what happened to me," said Rubin, who made 36 unforced errors in the 80-minute match.

"I could not afford to go to a third set," Zvereva said. "My body is tired from all the tennis I have played this week. I knew I had to close it out."

And she did. Rubin made more errors to start the final game and Zvereva punctuated her first singles victory since 1990 with an ace. She had five for match and got 61 per cent of her serves in.

Martin wins ATP event

MEMPHIS, Tennessee (AP) — Todd Martin, runner-up at last month's Australian Open, went one step better to beat fellow-American Brad Gilbert 6-4, 7-5 in Sunday's \$800,000 Memphis ATP tournament.

Martin, ranked ninth in the world, won the second pro title of his career and the \$110,500 first prize, by beating the two-time former champion 6-4, 7-5 in the final.

Twelve months ago, Martin lost to Jim Courier in his first ATP final but he was saved from a rematch when the 39th-ranked Gilbert beat the world number-three in the quarterfinals.

Martin, beaten by Pete Sampras in the Australian Open final last month, outscored Gilbert and scored a big percentage of his points off Gilbert's second serves.

In the second-set Gilbert broke to lead 4-3, but Martin stormed back immediately and

went on to snatch victory on a Gilbert double-fault.

Gilbert has now lost seven straight finals since his last ATP triumph in 1990.

After his win Martin, who had lost five straight finals since winning at Coral Springs, Florida, last May said: "It's nice to complete the job this time." "Brad lulls you to sleep with the softness of his balls. But when you make him hit a shot, he hits it hard and accurately. When you're even or ahead, he lulls you to sleep more. Whenever I was behind, I felt more intensity."

"I knew I would be at net more than he would be. I knew I had to be patient and when I had the chance to come in, I needed to hit a good approach shot and a good volley."

Gilbert said: "I wanted to slow him down because he likes the pace but my serve let me down. His future is looking really good. If he were a stock, you would want to buy some."

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIFF & TANIAH HIRSCH
Globe Theatre Media Services, Inc.

ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♦K754 ♠AQ72 ♣1068742

The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ 3 ♠ 0 ♠

—Weak.
What do you bid now?

A.—As North-East passed you would probably have jumped to four spades, so why not make the same bid now? The problem with three spades is it doesn't sound all that invitational and could be made on a more balanced hand. Don't put pressure on partner. Take a shot at game.

Q.2—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
♦A765 ♠AQ5432 ♣Q ♣A102

The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 3 NT Pass

—?
What do you bid now?

A.—If you treated your hand as a minor suit, it is easily corrected to four hearts, you are underbidding four clubs taking potential. With known nine-card fit, we would make a gentle move by cue-bidding four clubs, intending to venture no further than four hearts next, if we still have room for that bid.

Q.3—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♦K1065 ♠AQ5432 ♣Q ♣A102

The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 3 NT Pass

—?
What do you bid now?

A.—If you treated your hand as a minor suit, it is easily corrected to four hearts, you are underbidding four clubs taking potential. With known nine-card fit, we would make a gentle move by cue-bidding four clubs, intending to venture no further than four hearts next, if we still have room for that bid.

Q.4—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♦K1065 ♠AQ5432 ♣Q ♣A102

The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 3 NT Pass

—?
What do you bid now?

A.—If you treated your hand as a minor suit, it is easily corrected to four hearts, you are underbidding four clubs taking potential. With known nine-card fit, we would make a gentle move by cue-bidding four clubs, intending to venture no further than four hearts next, if we still have room for that bid.

Q.5—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♦K1065 ♠AQ5432 ♣Q ♣A102

The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 3 NT Pass

—?
What do you bid now?

A.—If you treated your hand as a minor suit, it is easily corrected to four hearts, you are underbidding four clubs taking potential. With known nine-card fit, we would make a gentle move by cue-bidding four clubs, intending to venture no further than four hearts next, if we still have room for that bid.

Q.6—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♦K1065 ♠AQ5432 ♣Q ♣A102

The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 3 NT Pass

—?
What do you bid now?

A.—If you treated your hand as a minor suit, it is easily corrected to four hearts, you are underbidding four clubs taking potential. With known nine-card fit, we would make a gentle move by cue-bidding four clubs, intending to venture no further than four hearts next, if we still have room for that bid.

Q.7—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♦K1065 ♠AQ5432 ♣Q ♣A102

The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 3 NT Pass

—?
What do you bid now?

A.—If you treated your hand as a minor suit, it is easily corrected to four hearts, you are underbidding four clubs taking potential. With known nine-card fit, we would make a gentle move by cue-bidding four clubs, intending to venture no further than four hearts next, if we still have room for that bid.

Pippen emerges from Jordan's shadow to star in All-Star Game

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Scottie Pippen, in the shadow of Michael Jordan's spotlight for the first six years of his career, knew it was time to grab it himself in the NBA All-Star Game.

"Having Michael on our club really overshadowed guys like Horace Grant, B.J. Armstrong and myself," Pippen said late Sunday after leading the East to a 127-118 victory over the West. "It was time for us to step up as All-Stars a little more. I had my mind set to play much better than I played in past All-Star games."

Pippen, making his fourth All-Star appearance but his first since his superstar teammate with the Chicago Bulls retired last October, scored 29 points on 9-for-15 shooting and grabbed 11 rebounds to win most valuable player honours.

"I tried to assert myself a little more," Pippen said. "My skills are able to put me up among the elite players. I don't think I needed to go out today and prove anything to anybody."

East coach Lenny Wilkens, who this season became the second NBA coach with 900 career victories, had seven first-time All-Stars on his 12-man roster. But he went with his veterans when things got tight, especially Pippen, Mark Price and Patrick Ewing — who combined for 69 points.

"I just like the attitude of the guys," Wilkens said. "They showcase, but they're true competitors. When the game is on the line, they want to win. Pippen, Mark and Patrick were steady down the stretch."

Pippen, wearing fire-engine red shoes, averaged 9.3 points in his first three All-Star games. Despite his 29 points, he only scored two in the fourth quarter, but they were big — a baseline jumper with 2:10 left after the West pulled within two points.

"It was the shoes," Pippen joked about his performance. "Everybody was looking at my feet too much. I was shooting well and I just continued to let my shot flow."

The East took its largest lead, 103-90, in the first minutes of the fourth quarter, but the West rallied with a 17-5 run, closing to 108-107 with 7:17 left. Gary Payton's six points and Daid Robinson's five keyed the comeback.

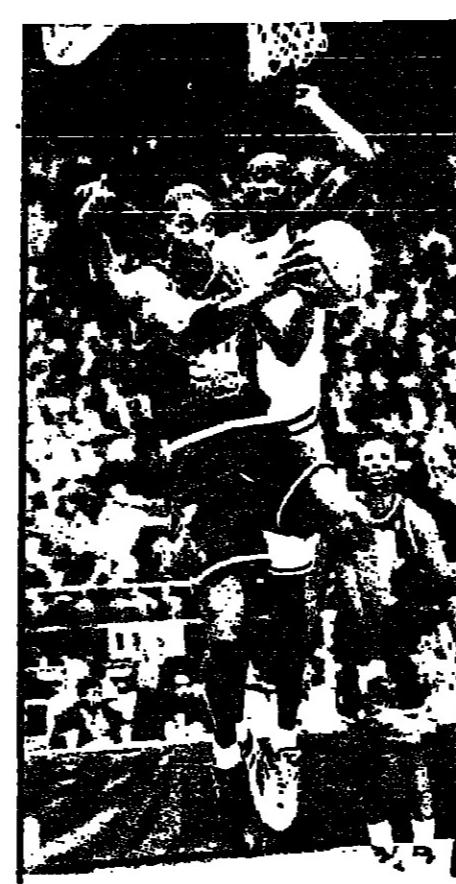
But the East regained control as New York teammates Ewing and John Starks combined to score the next nine East points for a 117-110 lead.

A basket by Clifford Robinson and a 3-pointer by John Stockton made it 117-115 before Pippen, after missing two free throws, connected on his baseline shot.

David Robinson and Hakeem Olajuwon shared scoring honours with 19 points each for the West, which trails the All-Star series 28-16.

Ewing scored 12 of his 20 points in the fourth quarter and Price also had 20 for the East, which had 10 3-pointers to one for the West. Pippen was 5-for-9 from that range.

"He was in a zone," West coach George Karl



NBA Eastern Conference's Scottie Pippen of the Chicago Bulls goes to the bucket past Shawn Kemp of Seattle during the 2nd quarter of the All-Star Game (AP photo)

said. "It's difficult when you're substituting a great deal to keep the same guy on him."

Shaquille O'Neal, the NBA's leading scorer this season, had a miserable day for the East, missing 10 of 12 shots and seven of 11 free throws to finish with eight points. But he managed 10 rebounds.

"They were quadruple teaming me, triple-teaming me," O'Neal said. "I thought somebody was going to play me straight up, but it didn't happen. It means somebody respects me if they had to put four guys on me."

The West, down by eight at halftime, rallied in the third quarter, closing within four twice before Price hit a jumper and a 3-pointer in a span of 37 seconds, helping the East rebuild the margin to 101-90 going into the final 12 minutes.

Olajuwon dominated inside for the West early in the game with 12 points in the first nine minutes on two dunks, two layups, a hook and two free throws.

The West led 25-23 late in the first period, but the East went on a spurt and led 72-64 at the half.

Germany, Norway and Russia reap Olympic victory

LILLEHAMMER, Norway (AP) — Germany, Norway and Russia struck gold at the Lillehammer Games Monday. The United States reaped heartbreak.

— Germany's George Hackl became the first solo luger to win back-to-back Olympic gold medals.

In Thomas Alsgaard, a bright new Norwegian cross-country star was born.

On the speedskating oval, Russia's Alexander Golubev set an Olympic record while leading his team to a 1-2 finish in the men's 500-metres sprint.

For the Americans, woes began when their lone medal hope crashed out of competition. Then, hard-luck Dan Jansen slipped during the speedskating sprint and failed for the fourth-straight Olympics to mine gold or even the lesser metals of silver and bronze.

While vying athletes celebrated or raged on Lillehammer's ice and snow, "President Juan Antonio Samaranch headed for a real war zone — Sarajevo, the shattered site of the 1984 Winter Olympics.

During his visit to Bosnia, Samaranch wants "to renew the call for the 'Olympic truce,'" the IOC said. Samaranch previously had urged Bosnia's warring factions to observe a cease-fire during the Feb. 27 Lillehammer Games.

On the third day of the games, the first gold medal went to Hackl, a 27-year-old Bavarian who began sledding at age 10. Supporters hoisted

World record wiped out

BIRMINGHAM, England (AP) — Colin Jackson equalled, but did not break, the world indoor 60-metre hurdles record over the weekend, British track officials said Monday.

A review of the photo-finish judge Raymond Hutchinson in Monday's edition of the Times, came when he had only a rushed look at the print before the time was announced at the meet.

Host Norway, which already has won two gold and three silver medals to lead the Lillehammer medal race, was given new hope for an Alpine victory as Lasse Jusas took Monday's downhill portion of the men's combined. He edged Americans Kyle Rasmussen and Tommy Moe, gold medallist in Sunday's downhill.

Jusas, who holds the world record of 35.76 and every other speedskating honour except an Olympic medal, slipped coming out of the turn and had to brace himself against the ice with his left hand. His time of 36.68 put him well out of medal contention.

"It's a bit of a shock to me," Jusas said. "I'm not making excuses, but it's not a place I've slipped before... I would have won by quite a bit if I didn't slip."

Jusas' wife, Robin, was in the stands with several family members. She couldn't bear to watch after her husband's misstep.

"As soon as I saw it slip, I said, 'Why God,' again," she said. "God can't be cruel, she said. "I'm sure we'll find out. One of us will understand."

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In other Hockey play Monday, the Czech Republic faced Austria, and the favoured Russians were pitted against the Finns, 3-1 upset winners over the Czechs on opening day.

German luger Hackl began the third day of the games leading Prock by one-hundredth of a second, then fell behind by .48 of a second on the third run. But Oreck faltered on the final run and finished .613 of a second behind Hackl.

Go where to Cheers
816690 after 6:00 p.m.
ELITE CAFE : SWIFIYEH
Jazz

ROYAL JORDANIAN

NEWS IN BRIEF

Assad sends Ramadan greetings to King

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Monday received a cable from Syrian President Hafez Al Assad congratulating him on the start of the Holy Month of Ramadan. Assad wished King Hussein continued good health and happiness and the Jordanian people further progress and prosperity.

Saddam's son-in-law recovers from surgery

AMMAN (AFP) — Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's son-in-law, Lieutenant-General Hussein Kamal Hassan Al Majid, was recovering here Monday from a brain tumour, a medical official said. Gen. Majid, 36, entered the King Hussein Medical Centre here last Tuesday and underwent an operation on Saturday, the official told AFP. He will remain at least another week in the hospital which is under tight security, added the official, who could not give further details on the operation's outcome.

Lebanon guerrillas wound militiaman

MARJAYOUN (R) — Pro-Iranian guerrillas firing mortar bombs and anti-tank rockets attacked two Israeli-backed militia posts in South Lebanon on Monday, wounding one soldier, security sources said. A roadside bomb planted by Hezbollah guerrillas also hit a civilian car near the village of Tair Herfa inside Israel's occupation zone in the south, they said. The sources said the car was badly damaged but the driver escaped unharmed. His identity was not known. Hezbollah guerrillas fired rocket-propelled grenades and anti-tank rockets at the South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia position in Braachet and mortar bombs at the SLA's Kfar Houneh post. One militiaman was wounded at Kfar Houneh but there were no casualties at Braachet. Israeli and SLA gunners retaliated, shelling a guerrilla-held area north of the 15-kilometre deep buffer strip.

Israelis join Palestinian's appeal

TEL AVIV (AP) — Three Israeli authors joined a Palestinian poet in appealing Sunday to the supreme court against an "exceedingly slow" probe into the fatal shooting of a 17-year-old Palestinian in November. Poet Izzat Ghazawi's son Rami died after being shot in the stomach by troops who stormed his high school in the West Bank town of Al Birch to quell a stone-throwing demonstration. The Association for Civil Rights in Israel said the boy was shot while trying to help a wounded friend. He later died in hospital. Mr. Ghazawi told Israel Radio he wanted to know "why the military did not investigate the problem until now." Also listed on the petition are authors David Grossman, Shulamit Hareven and Gafit Hazan-Rokem, the civil rights group's lawyer, Elihu Abram, said that key witnesses to the shooting had not been contacted.

Yemen tries to free kidnapped Chinese

SANA (AFP) — The Yemeni government is trying to win the release of three Chinese technicians who were kidnapped while helping to build a road in Yemen's rugged northeast. Chinese embassy officials said here Monday, "We hope they will be freed in the next few days," a Chinese diplomat said. "The Yemeni government is working hard for their release." The three were kidnapped Saturday morning while working on a road between Hija, 127 kilometres north of Sanaa and Maareb, 173 kilometres east of the capital, embassy officials said. Yemeni sources said the Chinese were kidnapped by three people wanted by the police for various murders. There were no details on what the kidnappers wanted and where they were holding the technicians.

U.S. Navy rescues Indian livestock vessel

BAHRAIN (AP) — A U.S. Navy frigate has rescued an Indian livestock vessel and its 23-member crew which had been adrift for 15 days on the Arabian Sea, the navy said Monday. The 27-metre Shaleh Al Hasam was sailing from Somalia to Dubai with 700 sheep aboard when it experienced engine trouble, according to a statement from the U.S. Naval Forces Central Command. On Saturday, a helicopter from the USS Curtis spotted the troubled vessel about 150 kilometres southeast of Oman and the frigate towed it to shore. The crew of 17 Indians and six Somalis were given food and water, which had begun to run scarce, the statement said.

Qian plans trip to Pakistan, Iran

BEIJING (AFP) — Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen will make a two-week trip to five Asian and Middle Eastern countries, including close allies Pakistan and Iran, starting next week. The Xinhua news agency said Monday, beginning Feb. 21 Mr. Qian will visit Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Iran, in that order, returning home March 1. Xinhua said, without providing details on the itinerary. The first stop, Pakistan, is a country with which China enjoys traditionally excellent relations, as demonstrated when Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto made a trip to Beijing in December, just after her return to power. Pakistan and China are engaged in nuclear cooperation which has worried Western countries, and during Ms. Bhutto's trip to the Chinese capital a joint communiqué demanded the lifting of U.S. sanctions imposed on both countries last August to protest the alleged Chinese sale of missile technology to the Pakistanis. In another dispatch, Xinhua said Mr. Qian had received Monday a special envoy of Bhutto, adding that they "exchanged opinions on issues of common concern." Iran, the last stop on Mr. Qian's trip, is another old friend of China. The two countries decided to step up cooperation — especially on nuclear power — during a trip to China by Iranian President Ali Akbar Rafsanjani in September 1992. Western countries also accuse China of selling missile technology to Iran.

Druze leader welcomes papal visit

BEIRUT (R) — Druze leader Walid Jumblatt, whose forces drove Christians from the Shouf mountains during Lebanon's civil war, called for coexistence with the Christians and welcomed Pope John Paul's planned visit to Lebanon. Mr. Jumblatt attended Sunday mass at a Maronite Christian church in the Shouf village of Beit Eddine, the first held there since it was badly damaged in fighting between Druze and Christian forces in 1983. "We are all waiting for the blessed visit of the great guest, the holy father, to Lebanon and specifically to Beit Eddine," he said after the mass. Pope John Paul is due to make a week-long trip to Lebanon by June and Vatican envoys have visited the Shouf to prepare for his visit to the area. Mr. Jumblatt said in December that he was not sure he wanted to see the Pope visit the predominantly Druze Shouf mountain. But he said on Sunday: "We will cooperate together so that we have an appropriate reception which confirms that the Shouf was and will remain an area of coexistence."

Kuwaiti cabinet to resign in mid-March

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — The Kuwaiti cabinet will resign in mid-March and a new government will be formed, the Monday edition of Al Siyassah daily reported, adding that the country's leaders wanted to strengthen the executive. The paper, citing informed sources, said the resignation would occur after "Id Al Fitr, the feast marking the end of the Holy Month of Ramadan which began Feb. 11 in Kuwait." Senior Kuwaiti officials want to "bolster the executive branch by uniting the positions and speeding up the decision-making process," the paper said. Al Siyassah said the current government had accomplished its mission by reviving the 1962 constitution and parliamentary life.

France to consider excluding Jordanians from exit permit rule

By Suhair Obeidat
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — France has promised to consider excluding Jordanians from new exit permit regulations it will impose on foreign nationals residing in its territories, a senior Foreign Ministry official said Monday.

The official, who asked not to be identified by name, disclosed that the promise was made during the talks French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe held here during his two-day visit which ended Sunday.

On Saturday, France decreed that nationals of 13 countries, including Jordanians, will need exit visas to leave France. The decree, signed by Interior Minister Charles Pasqua, was published Saturday in the government's official journal, meaning it took effect as law.

The Jordanian government was notified of the new regulations by its embassy in Paris and their acting foreign minister, Fawaz Abu Al Ghannam, raised the issue with Mr. Juppe who promised to discuss the matter with the French interior minister, the official told to *Jordan Times*.

A French official was quoted Saturday as saying that the requirement, to take effect on April 1, was needed because these countries were considered "sensitive."

"We are a victim of terrorism and fighting hard against it," said the Jordanian official, adding that Jordan's other concern was that other European countries would follow France's lead in adopting such measures.

"To our knowledge, the number of Jordanian nationals residing in Paris does not exceed 40-50 people. But this is a political issue. We hope that France will reconsider its decision," the official said. On Monday, Pierre Gass-

man, the press attaché at the French embassy in Amman, said that his government had not yet given him reasons for the new regulations.

In addition to Jordan, other countries affected by the measure include Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, North Korea, Lebanon, Libya, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Sudan and Yemen. Palestinians will also need the exit permits.

The exit visas are aimed in particular at curbing illegal entry by immigrants who have been sent or otherwise acquired documents belonging to foreigners who have remained in France, according to some reports.

The introduction of visas will mean that on reentry papers will bear proof that the holder had actually left the country. Reuter reported.

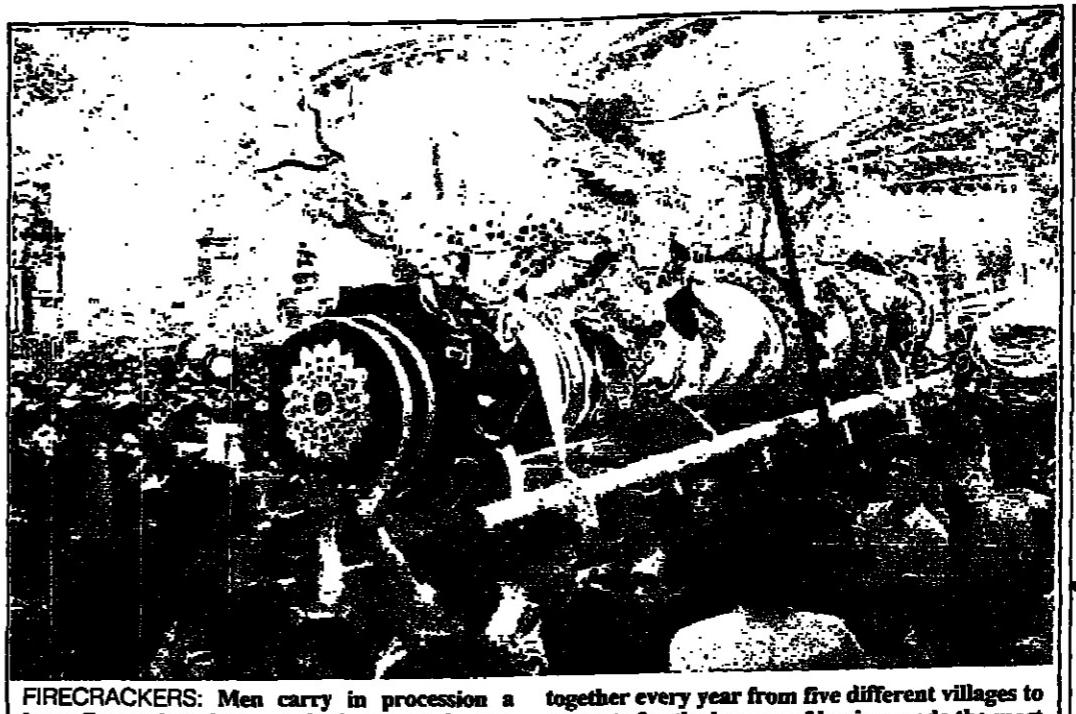
The decree stemmed from a little noticed provision in a controversial hardline law proposed by the conservative government and adopted by parliament last August, the agency said.

The law restricts the right of foreigners to enter and reside in France and curtails clandestine immigration by clamping down on marriages of convenience and family reunification.

An administrative memorandum requiring exit visas of nationals from more than 50 foreign countries, published in 1986, was ruled unconstitutional in 1991, the official said.

"We are a victim of terrorism and fighting hard against it," said the Jordanian official, adding that Jordan's other concern was that other European countries would follow France's lead in adopting such measures.

"Today France is becoming a country with some of the most restrictive anti-foreign laws," Mr. Juppe told France 3 television.



FIRECRACKERS: Men carry in procession a huge firecracker during a festival organised at Dong Ky village, some 20 kilometres northwest of Hanoi, Vietnam. In Dong Ky, village clans get together every year from five different villages to compete for the honour of having made the most powerful with the loudest explosion (AFP photo)

Libya denies link to Maaytah murder

CAIRO (AP) — Libya on Monday denied reports linking it to the assassination of a Jordanian diplomat and charged the Western media with attempting to disrupt its "brotherly relations" with Jordan.

The Libyan statement follows a remark Sunday by King Hussein that the leader of the group that assassinated Nayeb Maaytah gave this order to kill the diplomat out of the Arab capital where he is based.

In its denial, the official Libyan news agency JANA blamed the Western media for "implicating Libya with the aim of harming it and of harming its brotherly relations with Jordan," the AP reported.

On Sunday, King Hussein told the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee that a terrorist group, known to Jordan, had killed Mr. Maaytah, 42. He did not name the group but said it had committed "similar crimes against our diplomats and against us in the past."

Although Libya in past four years tried to change its image as a supporter of terrorists, it recently strengthened rhetoric against the West. Last month, Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi openly invited Abu Nidal and Ahmad Jibril, another Palestinian guerrilla leader, to Libya.

Abu Nidal, whose real name is Sabri Al Banna, has been blamed for the killing of a number of Jordanian diplomats. He split from the Palestine Liberation Organisation in 1973 and at various times had links to Iraq, Syria and Libya. His group was blamed for the 1985 attacks on Rome and Vienna airports that killed 17 people.

Mr. Maaytah was shot dead in Beirut on Jan. 29 as he was driving out of his garage to work.

Sudan rebels claim town attack foiled

MUNDRI, Sudan (Agencies)

— Sudanese rebels have repulsed a government offensive on the southern town of Mundri near the Zairean border.

Guerrilla area commander Gier Chaung told reporters who visited the frontline that government forces briefly captured Mundri on Saturday but were driven out later that afternoon.

"The Khartoum flag was raised over Mundri for two hours but we reorganized and fought them off," he said.

Ten government soldiers were killed for the loss of one guerrilla killed and 10 wounded.

Officials of the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) said the attack on Mundri, part of the biggest dry season offensive in 10 years, forced 40,000 terrified villagers to flee.

The government launched

its offensive with an artillery bombardment and took the town 20 minutes later.

Reporters were forced to withdraw but returned the next day and found the town back in SPLA hands.

Mr. Chaung showed reporters a government soldier captured during the fighting.

Yusef Hamoosa told reporters he was part of two government battalions which left Terakeka 200 kilometres away to attack.

The rebel forces also captured some mortars, an anti-aircraft gun and a large quantity of ammunition.

Another SPLA commander, Mahual Ayom Dur, told reporters government forces had retreated to Amadi 40 kilometres away.

"Our men are in pursuit of them. Hopefully we will capture Amadi within the next couple of days," he said.

TV producer shot dead in Algerian terror campaign

ALGIERS (AFP) — An Algerian television producer was shot twice by armed gunmen Monday as more Islamic fundamentalists were sentenced by special courts and threats of a stepped up Ramadan terror campaign mounted.

Producer Aziz Smati, 40, was waiting for an emergency operation in hospital after being shot twice by gunmen in front of his Algiers home, his family said.

Mr. Smati, who also worked on musical variety programmes for Algeria's French-speaking third station, joins a growing number of Algerian arts and media personalities to have been attacked during Algeria's two year undeclared civil war between the military-dominated government and fundamentalists.

Twenty-seven Islamic fundamentalists were handed prison sentences of up to 20 years

Monday for gun running for fundamentalist groups, sources at the special court at Oran, western Algeria, said.

Six of the accused heard the sentences of up to eight years in the court. The remaining 21, who are still on the run, were sentenced to up to 20 years, the maximum demanded by the prosecutor, in their absence, sources added.

The group, from the Maghrib border town with Morocco, were accused of smuggling arms across the frontier to armed fundamentalists and helping veterans of the Afghan war against the Soviet Union to slip into Algeria.

Islamic militants have threatened tax officials, traders and women in a fundamentalist backlash seeking to impose a climate of terror as Ramadan gets underway, newspaper reports said Monday.

Twenty-seven Islamic fundamentalists were handed prison sentences of up to 20 years

COLUMN

Melina Mercouri hospitalised in New York

ATHENS (AFP) — Melina Mercouri, Greek minister of culture, was admitted to Memorial Hospital in New York for a series of tests, her ministry said here Monday. Ms. Mercouri travelled to the United States last week with her husband Jules Dassin, cinema director, and her brother Spyros Mercouri, 69, a 1989 doctor at Memorial, operated on Mercouri, 69, to remove a tumor from her lungs. She also underwent surgery to her spine in Paris in August 1991, and was later treated for pulmonary blood clots.

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